

The Dream That Made Us

Structural Changes in the New Zealand Dairy Industry and What That Means For Dairy Farmers and People Working in the Industry Today

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Cultural Change

The New Zealand dairy industry has been built on a dream to own your own farm. This dream has dominated our behaviour for the last 100 years and is hard-wired into our psyche. It is this core belief that drives how we operate farms and how we employ people. As we have moved away from the traditional family farm and increased in scale, we work with and employ more people than in the past and because of this, tensions have risen. Negative conversations regarding staff have replaced the weather as the main conversations at dairy farmer social outings. But what do we do? We wait for it to get better because farmers are really good at waiting.

“A farmer has to be an optimist or we still wouldn’t be farming” Will Rodgers -
www.willrodgerstoday.com

Farmers are great at telling themselves it will be better. We wait out the cycles of the markets and the cycles of the weather. We say things like: “Every day of dry weather is one day closer to the rain”. We wait for staff to be better. We wait for the problem to be solved. Unlike the weather, waiting for people to change won’t improve the situation.

“We immediately become more effective when we decide to change ourselves rather than waiting for things to change for us”. (Stephen Covey , The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, 1989, Free Press)

We need to look at ourselves, how we employ people and what we need to do to make it better. We owe it to our families and our people and to ourselves. The frustration of running (or working in) an underperforming team is making a job we love into a misery. The good thing is, there is a better way. You can have high performing teams that you enjoy working with. You can have a positive influence on other people’s lives.

“Be a leader, not a follower” (James Kerr,Legacy, 2013, Constable)

The All Blacks changed their culture and massively increased their performance. The dairy industry can learn from the lesson and do the same.

Contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| I. | Introduction | 4 |
| II. | The Golden Age | 5 |
| III. | The NeXt Generation | 9 |
| IV. | The “Y Do We Want To Do A Job That Takes Over Your Life?” Generation | 19 |
| V. | The Good The Bad And The Ugly (survey results) | 21 |
| | - My Recommendations for a Follow-Up Survey | 26 |
| VI. | Future Predictions – With a Black Hat | 27 |
| VII. | It Was A Wonderful Period In Our History | 29 |
| VIII. | Where Does the Culture Come From? | 31 |
| IX. | Bigger Faster Harder – Burnout | 32 |
| X. | You Need To Do What I Did To Succeed | 33 |
| XI. | The Loss Of Our Egalitarian Past When The Generation Changed | 34 |
| XII. | Practical Solutions So Dairy Farmers Can Do The People Thing Better | 36 |
| XIII. | Conclusion | 43 |
| XIV. | References | 44 |
| XV. | Appendices | 49 |

Introduction

When looking at people and culture, it is difficult to use traditional academic processes to understand how we see the world, and how we think and feel. This is because the influences on humans tend to be more around emotions, rather than logic. Traditional academic process has been around logic or critical thinking, and this has served us well but I have strayed away from this discipline to explain the emotion behind our culture. I have chosen to deliver this paper in way that can explain the perception or the emotion of our culture - The Culture of Dairy Farming. I have also written this paper so a dairy farmer that reads this paper can easily follow the information. I have used the story telling approach to allow the reader to relate to different perspectives. The hope is to allow for a solution to develop by having a better understanding of different people's perspectives.

I have relied on comments and perceptions from interviewees to explain an agricultural perspective. I have also conducted a survey of dairy farmers to understand how they see or think about their work and life.

"Story telling is an important part of change management" Rick Torben, www.torbenrick.eu/blog/

"Critical thinking is excellent but not enough" Edward De Bono, Think Before It's Too Late, 2010, Random House, UK

The Golden Age

The sun is just starting to work its way into the eastern sky. Another still morning at Brian and Bev's farm. The still air carries the pulsing sound of the small herringbone cowshed. The farmer is busy following the patterns of his day. The same pattern he has followed for most of his life since he started milking cows when he was 15 years old. Brian pokes his head out of the front of the cowshed for a look at the sky. He takes a deep breath and his eyes follow the raceway running down the centre of his farm. He feels the pride.

Brian has seen this sun rise every day this year. In fact, he has seen this same sunrise every day for close to every day over the last 32 years. He hears the sucking noise of a slipping cup and he moves quickly back into the cowshed. He starts rowing up the next cows to milk. "Come on girls, you know the drill". The next row moves forward. Cow 67 has been waiting for her turn and she moves forward and into her space. Always first in row 9. Brian calls to 97 as she saunters past. "Morning girl", Brian says. Cow 67 ignores him but seems happy with the greeting. It has been a good year for Brian. The winter had been kind. The spring had been warm and early which allowed the team of 220 cows to peak nicely and the summer has been good so far.

There is a skip in his step. His oldest daughter is getting married today and he is looking forward to the wedding - and yes, he was taking this afternoon off. The first milking off for as long as Brian could remember. Brian has two daughters and two sons and this is the first of his daughters to be married. He is quietly proud of what his family has achieved. "Get up girl", he mummurs as he pushes the last cow into the row. Bar down, pick up the sprayer and moves to the front of the shed. The movement so natural and balanced. The flow and ease of a person who has repeated this same task over and over. The same pattern, milking his cows for 30 years without fail.

It had been hard in the early years, working on his first farm job. It was hard work for a young man. He thought about how much he was paid - five dollars per week - the average wage on a dairy farm. "When you think of what people get paid today"! He shakes his head in a show of disbelief. He can remember going a whole year without a day off. That was just normal. "Different then though", he thinks to himself. "There was more time in the day to get things done." For breakfast, Brian's boss' wife would cook them bacon and eggs for breakfast. They would stop for morning tea and afternoon tea and she would cook the best scones he had ever tasted. It was tough, but they had more time in the day - it wasn't so intense.

His attention jumps back to what he was doing as the cow he was cupping moved her back feet. After that many years milking, Brian had a sense for when a cow was going to kick out. "Settle down girl", Brian grumped and then returned to his work. His mind wandered back to his first job. It had been a nice place to be. The owner, his boss, did yell at him a bit but that was just how it was done in those days. He remembers being sad when he had to leave. The owner had told him that he had to "finish up" at milking one morning out of the blue. No process, no redundancy - just "tomorrow is your last day. I can't afford you for the rest of the season".

Laws were different then. Anyone could drain swamps, cut down forests and the effluent went straight off the yard into the stream. That's why the shed was built by the drain to make it easier to get rid of the effluent off the yard. "Things sure have changed", Brian thinks to himself. "The government use to pay us to drain swamps and cut down forests".

After that first job, Brian was able to pick up a lower order share-milking job and then save up for a 50/50 share-milking job. It was easier when Brian was share-milking. He had a bit more flexibility in his day. Working by himself also had the advantage of milking earlier or later as it suited him. The rugby club was the centre of Brian's world then. It was often the only time he left the farm. Tuesday and Thursday was practice. Saturday, of course, was game day. Every Saturday morning, the patterns were the same. Up at 4am, tea and toast in the quiet of the morning, and then out to milk. There was always urgency on Saturday mornings to get the jobs done in time to get to rugby. He was always into the house by 9am and Bev (his wife) had his cooked breakfast ready for him, his rugby bag ready for him, and town cloths laid out on the bed. She was already dressed and ready to leave, and as Brian washed and put the town clothes on, Bev washed the breakfast dishes. This didn't change as the children came. He smiled as he thought of his wife.

"Morning Dear" comes a call from the front of the shed. Bev his loving wife for the last 43 years, pops in to say good morning. A big smile on her face shows the love. "Big day dear" she calls to Brian. You can hear the excitement in her voice. The morning chores are nearly finished - she's fed the dogs, let the chooks out, and prepared the breakfast for Brian and some of the family that were staying at the moment.

Bev is excited about the marriage of their daughter, as it is also a chance to get together with the people that had been her friends over the years. The people in her community and neighbours when they first bought the farm had quickly become her friends. Her mind dances back to the 1970's when the road they live on, had small dairy farms scattered every few kilometres. On the stretch of five kilometres to the local town, there used to be eight cowsheds. Today there is only three. Each farm used to milk about 100 cows. Each farm had one family. It made a community. Today with the bigger farms it is not the same. Neighbours don't socialise like they used to. Most of the time they are too busy to stop and talk. Bev longs for what it was. The dances and 21st birthday parties in the local hall. The rugby on Saturday, where everyone went to see the local young men play their sport.

The dairy farmers would race home after the game, milk their cows and head straight back to the rugby club. It was a society set up around the dairy farms. They had similar goals, they worked together to help each other out. Bev thought about how the community would get together to help out. If there was ever a flood or a fire, everyone would be there helping out. In summer, the people would work together, going from farm to farm picking up hay on each other's farms. It was fun. The men would spend the hot afternoon picking up the hay and as the afternoon finished, they would make their way to the house and sit on the front porch, telling stories. The payment was getting together with their

neighbours, their friends and having a meal and beer together. It created community, and it created support.

It is not like that today. The people on the bigger farms next door would never stick around. They seemed to spend all day and night driving around in their noisy cars. But today was her day - a big smile appeared on her face. She was looking forward to seeing her old friends again.

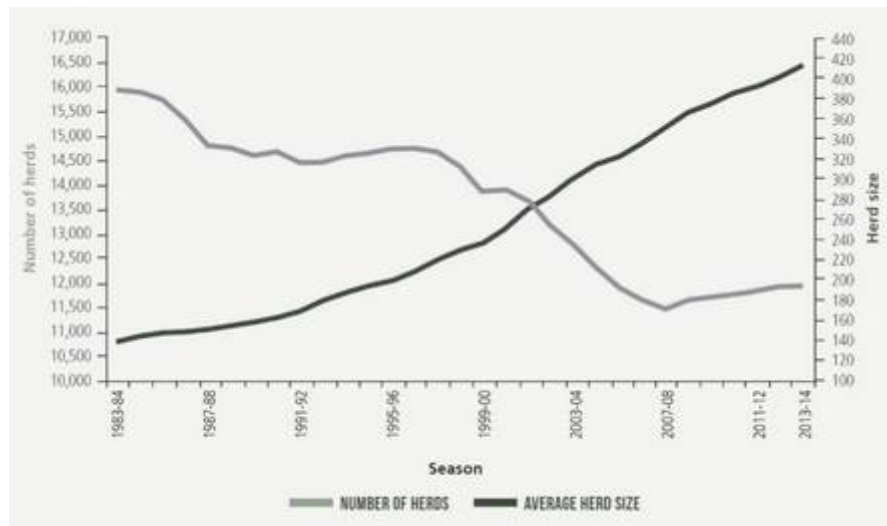
Brian finishes the wash at the cowshed, pulling the bung, letting the air rush into the vacuum pump. The scream signals the end of milking. The wild cats come running, knowing the familiar sound - which means they get their morning breakfast of left over milk. As the cats lick at their bowl with focus, Brian flicks the switch on the cowshed lights. "Right, all done". Brian looks at the cats, "No time to talk. Need to go". He strides out of the cowshed and onto the two wheeler motorbike that has been patiently waiting since the start of milking this morning.

On the bike now, and at speed, he drives down the main raceway. The wind pushes past his face and he looks at the farm he helped create. He had bought the farm in 1981. He had been share-milking for six years and had managed to save up enough to make a deposit on the farm. The Rural Bank had helped finance them into the farm. They'd been so ecstatic when they had been told they could buy their first farm. Brian and Bev had share-milked 360 cows before they had bought their own farm. A 360 cow herd was big herd in the 1980's. Brain goes through the numbers in his head:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| The Farm cost (60ha) | \$100,000 (\$1,600/ha) |
| Sold 160 cows for \$200/cow | \$32,000 |
| Saved from their share-milking job | \$24,000 |
| Plant already owned | |
| Borrowed from the Rural Bank | \$44,000 |

Brian's bike slows at the open gate. He turns in and buzzes past the water trough to check the cows had water. "Yep, all good there". Brian breaks hard at the gate, puts the stand down, jumps off the bike, closes the gate, jumps back on the bike, stands up, clutch in, in gear, and he's gone. A movement without thinking, a movement completed over and over again. Cows locked away and back to the house to see everyone - excited and happy to be with his family and friends on this great day.

The Total Number of Dairy Herds and Average Size of Dairy Herds in New Zealand 1983-2014



Sustainable Dairy Workplace Action Plan, Fed Farmers/DairyNZ, <http://www.dairynz.co.nz/about-us/dairy-industry-strategy/sustainable-dairying-workplace-action-plan/>

The New Zealand Dairy Industry to 1990

- Dairy farm values in relation to income, allowed most people, who applied themselves, to buy a dairy farm after 5 to 10 years of being in the industry. (*Interview notes*)
- There were strong rural societies that provided support for dairy farmers
- All people had a frugal outlook and there was no need to spend money to be part of a social group.
- The property owner had strong rights to use and act on their property as they decided. Society put little constraints on what could be done and had little compliance to deal with.
- Staff had few rights and it was easy to remove someone that was working for you.
- New Zealand understood dairy farmers and had a strong connection to dairying.
- The wife supported the family/husband, allowing the farmer (at that time usually the husband) to work 60 to 80 hours per week without burnout
- The rural bank helped finance people into their first farm with sometimes below market interest rates
- The worker boarded in the house and the wife fed him
- Working by yourself or with just one other gave flexibility in work hours to take quality time off
- The family also worked on the farm. There was not such a work/home life-split and there was less tension because of it. The husband and wife worked long hours, but often it was together as a family and they had the flexibility to take quality time off when required.

The NeXt Generation

The lights buzz into life high on the ceiling of the new 60 bail rotary cows shed. 4.30 am and Alex moves swiftly round the platform with easy movements, pulling the clusters off the rubber holders. The first of the cows move onto the yard as Alex picks up the wash-down hose. He moves around the cowshed wetting the walls and getting ready for the morning milking. Gloves on, apron on, coffee grabbed, out of the kitchen. He moves around to 'cups on'.

"Morning girl", Alex calls to the first cow on the platform. "Another day - here we go again". Cow 1127 is first on the platform. Her udder is full of milk and dripping. She is always first on the platform, and always full of milk. The fat ripples on her back as she moves. She is always first to the shed, first to be milked and first back to paddock. It takes an hour and a half to milk the 500 cows in her herd and she has worked out that she gets as much food as she wants if she gets to the paddock first.

Alex starts cupping the first round on the platform and he feels the pain shoot through his back as his body complains about the same action he has completed over the last 22 years. Alex pulls the string and stops the platform. He moves over to the wall where the coffee is sitting and takes a mouthful. The hot liquid takes away the pain he is feeling. He stretches his back and neck. "Come on body", he grumps to himself. It takes him longer to get going in the mornings these days. He is 40 this year and for the last 22 years he has been working on dairy farms. He thinks to himself, "I have been milking for more of my life than not", as he sips again from his coffee.

He thinks back to his school years. High school was a good time for Alex. The school work was fine and he managed to get good grades. He loved being with his friends and he loved the sport. The first IV rugby coach had made him captain, and he remembers being so proud. Alex, at six foot two, had dominated the game. It was a great year for the country school, as they took out the championship - beating the teams from the town. It was good fun and he was good at the game. The odd person said he could have been an All Black but Alex only wanted one thing. Straight out of school, Alex went farming. He had a dream. He wanted his own farm. He remembers listening to his grandfather and father talking about the farm (how the grass was growing, what production the cows were doing, and the current price of milk-fat). Even as a young boy, Alex would listen intently, taking in the information.

Alex loved being outside, being with the animals and loved the freedom that the farm gave him as a child. He had loved being on the farm with his father and working together. When Alex had been asked what he wanted to do when he grew up, he had always known. He wanted a farm. He asked his father, "Can I have a farm one day"? His father had always said, "Yes. Work hard, climb the ladder, go share-milking, save your pennies and you will have your own farm one day... And don't forget to work hard".

Alex had listened to the stories of his parents. "Your mother and me were so tight for money in those days, we had no chairs in the kitchen. We used to sit on beer crates at the table because we didn't have enough money". Or his mother's stories of how they used to go to town once every two months to buy

bulk food. Rice, sugar, flour, salt. Everything else was grown on the farm. They even made their own butter. It was hard for his parents and even after Alex was born, his parents worked long hours on the farm - but it taught him independence and work ethic. Alex would get home from school and his parents would be still at the cowshed. There would be food in the fridge and a note on the table from his mother. The welcome home note from his mum would always be full of love but with a list of things to do.

Love you, how was school? Please finish the few things on the list

Peel the spuds

Peel and cut carrots

Hang the washing out and put your rugby clothes in the wash

Finish mowing the lawn

Feed the dogs, cat and chooks

Feed your brother and don't pick on him or you will know about it when your Dad gets home

Do your homework and get down to the shed at 5.15 to help you father cross the cows over the road.

xxx Love Mum

In the spring time, Alex wouldn't see his father very often. Alex would be asleep before his dad was home from the shed and in the morning he was well gone before Alex was out of bed. Some nights, Alex would lay awake in bed as long as he could, hoping to hear his father walking down the hallway to his bedroom for a good night hug. He always knew it was him because he could hear his ankle crack as he walked. Alex thought nothing of the way his parents worked. It was just normal, and he took this same work ethic into his adult working career.

Alex's first dairy farming would be hard but he was keen and fit and loved being on the farm. He took a job on one of the larger farms in the area - a new conversion for one of the bigger farming groups. The first year was really difficult as the shed wasn't finished when the cows started to calve, the houses weren't finished as promised, and there were four staff members in one house for most of the first year. It was hard on the people and hard on the cows, but Alex did well. He always did his best to look after the cows, loved pasture management and the work ethic that his parents taught him made him succeed when others had failed. He just got the job done - no matter what.

Even though his mother was always worried about the number of hours he worked, he enjoyed the long slog, as it made him feel like he was succeeding. It felt like he was a part of the stories his father had told, and he was making his father proud. He was fulfilling childhood stories and good things would come. He would often think "I'll get my farm soon and it will all be worthwhile. I can take it easy then. It will all be worth it".

Alex's hard work got him noticed. He was soon promoted to Assistant Manager and then Manager. He was a big guy and a strong leader, so his people management was ok. People pissed him off at times but he would just push on, carrying them, to get the job done. It was frustrating how they wouldn't take the opportunities that he was giving them. The personal issues of his staff really frustrated him as well. "Why can't they just sort their life out"? The inconsistency of the people made him stressed but he just worked harder to cover them. He tried really hard to help people but over time, it hardened him. It made him angry that they behaved that way.

Alex had girlfriends but not many stayed with him for very long. They all thought he was great, loved his company but just got sick of the fact he was never off the farm. He would fall asleep when they went to the movies. He wouldn't turn up for birthday parties he had promised to go to because something on the farm had gone wrong. Alex's girlfriends would take him out to parties and he would be heading home before most the guests had arrived. Sometimes he would stay out all night and go straight to the shed but it wrecked the next day. It was hard work doing 70 -80 hours a week and then getting home to cook and clean.

Some days Alex would get home and just fall asleep on the couch - still in his farm gear, only to wake just before milking the next day, and having had no dinner, grabbing some weet-bix and off again. He came to really appreciate the influence his mother had in the household when he was growing up. It wasn't until he was working on the farm that he realised that the support of his mother had allowed his father to work the 70 – 80 hours a week that he did. His mates were travelling the world having fun in London and at the Running of the Bulls. Alex was at home milking his cows - following his dream. They would call him up from London - he was heading out to milking as they were going out to night clubs.

The rugby game he loved, and had traditionally been such a huge part of his rural culture, had to go. Alex did not have the time to play. He often didn't finish milking and feeding out in the morning until 10.00 am and then had to be back at 2pm to start milking again. It just didn't work. Most of the games didn't even start until 2pm. Because Alex was working with a team of people, it was hard to change other peoples milking times and lives to suit rugby.

Contact with neighbours was difficult. Often he was so busy on the farm, or people were waiting for him to do things, he wasn't able to yarn for long. He tried at times to make contact but he always felt like they looked at him with suspicion, as one of the "big farm's people" or "from that conversion". It was lonely at times but he had his dream, and he found like-minded people at a Young Farmers' Club. The Young Farmers were a great group of people to be with. He had fun with them and he could share similar stories. He learned a lot from them and he found them to be an inspirational organisation.

In 2004, Alex obtained a 500 cow, 50-50 share-milking job. He was 28 years old. It was also a tough job, milking 500 cows through a 28 aside herringbone shed. It was 18 rows and it took 3-4 hours to milk - so 6 to 8 hours in the shed per day. People he knew, warned him about the owner. He was renowned for being difficult. The farm was run down but he was desperate for the job and it would get him closer to

his dream of having his own farm. He had been told by the banker that he had to get bigger to get his own farm. He took the opportunity.

The farm owner, who was nice at the interview for the 50/50 job, started to show his true colours in about the third week into calving. He would come down to the shed shouting abuse at Alex and his staff about some minor issue. Early on, one of Alex's staff members left, after a run-in with the owner. She came to Alex in tears as the owner had abused her for leaving a gate open. She had seen that it the owner himself who had left the gate open. But when she tried to explain that to him, he hit the stratosphere. Hurling abuse, the owner walked up to her, shouting in her face. She feared he was going to lash out at her but her legs wouldn't move and were frozen in one spot. She could smell his horrid breath. The face of the old man was millimetres from her face and she could see his yellow rotting teeth up close from a lifetime of smoking. Bloodshot eyes bored into hers. His face was red and the veins in his head were bulging. The spit, flying from his month, hit her across her face as she stood paralysed. She just could not believe the actions of the person in front of her. It was one of the scariest and intimidating events of her life.

The owner went from full-on screaming, to stopping dead. A wry smile and a look of satisfaction came across his face. He walked away with Alex's worker still frozen in the same spot. It rocked her to the core, and it never left her. That experience, coupled with the 8 hours a day in the shed, made it a very easy decision to exit the job. When Alex had tried to talk to the owner about it, he had received a similar reaction. He was also given comments about the "suitability of woman on farms" and about how Alex was "too soft with his people" and "you need to put them in their place". "People are soft these days" and "this wouldn't happen in my day when I was running the farm". Alex was dumbfounded and amazed at the owner's actions. Later in the year, the owner justified his actions by saying, "That's how his father had treated people".

The un-professional behaviour was a terrible habit from the past, but it was able to be continued because of the binding effect the share-milking agreement had on people - coupled with the desire to own your own piece of land. Alex wondered if the immigrant workers had similar issues. After that encounter, he was always uncomfortable around the owner. The owner continued to be difficult. He would criticise Alex's decisions, go out of his way to find issues and generally bully Alex and his team. He hated it, and he hated what it was doing to his staff, but he put up with it and he counted down the days until the end of the share-milking contract. He needed the time on his CV and he needed to keep the job so he didn't lose money on a forced sale of his herd. Cow prices had dropped and he couldn't sell up. "65 days completed, 1,030 days left to go on this contract" as every morning Alex counted down the days. It was all worth it... It was getting him closer to his dream of owning his own farm one day.

During the 1990's, land prices had gone from \$10,000 per hectare (when he started his first 50/50 job) to over \$30,000/ha, and some people in the Waikato were saying it could go as high as \$50 – 60,000/ha. Alex felt the pressure of having to go faster to get into his own farm. He could see his dream slipping away. "It must be that I am not working hard enough? I need to make more money. I need more milk?"

He intensified. He brought more feed in. He bought more cows and obtained more debt. The bank manager and consultant thought it was a great idea, but he didn't understand the hidden costs.

Alex and his team worked harder. He thought, "more cows equals more equity, and that means I can get to buy the farm I want." "More cows milked per person, is also the driver of financial success", the bank manager pointed out. More cows per person also equalled more hours worked per person, because the owner had no desire to build a bigger shed.

In 2006 Alex met Joanna at his brother's 30th birthday party and they hit it off right from the start. Joanna was a similar age to Alex. She had grown up on a drystock farm but had been to university. She had trained as a lawyer and worked at one of the local firms. She was intelligent, skilled and hardworking. She had focused on her career and was the first woman and the youngest person to be made partner at the local law firm. Their similarities meant they hit it off, and for the first time, Alex had a partner that worked as hard as he did. Joanna (Jo) didn't mind his working hours, as it gave her time to work as well.

The couple were married in the Marlborough Sounds in a beautiful wedding. Their friends and family came, and it was a great event. The honeymoon was in Bali. Alex had a great time, and it was the first time in years that he actually felt relaxed. The first couple of days in Bali were interesting because he just couldn't sit still. He had the worst headache he had had for years. But after the second day, he was feeling better. He was able to sit around for a while and relax.

Alex and Jo had paid for their own wedding and Alex's parents criticised them about how much they had spent on the wedding. But Alex was torn - it was what his wife had wanted and also his friends were all doing the same sort of thing. It was hard to socialise with his core group of friends without spending money. The people he was really close to were scattered around the country. It cost money to see them. A 30th birthday party always meant travelling and summer holidays were always a big drive to get to where the friends or family were. Alex did very little socialising in the local community.

In 2012 Alex was 36 years old and he was lucky enough to pick up a 1,000 cow share milking job. The presentation of Alex and Jo in the interview and Alex's work ethic and performance throughout his career, meant that they obtained the job. It hadn't been an easy choice for the owners, as over 80 couples applied and it was a well sort-after situation. A new 60 bail rotary shed, 1000 cows and the owners were business people that lived in Auckland - so they were not around limiting the success of the couple. Alex loved the farm and how it was setup, but the main attraction to the job was the opportunity to work with professional people that communicated clear expectation. The owners focused on outcomes and left Alex to run the operation the best way he could. "Empowerment", they called it. Whatever it was, Alex loved the fact that they trusted him. He repaid that trust by performing to a very high level.

The birth of the couple's first child - a little boy they named Hunter - came on the 17th April 2013. It was such a great day for Alex and Jo. Alex was a proud father. The birth went well and the new child was home in the first 24 hours. There was no waiting around for a week in the hospital like in his parents' days. Mothers and babies were home almost straight away. The mother-in-law stayed the first two weeks, so Alex kept out of the house, finding excuses to stay out on the farm. After a flurry of cuddles and cooing by the in-laws, they vanished and Alex and Jo were left with their new baby.

Alex thought about how his father had interacted with him as a child. Alex wanted to be more involved with his children and he had been told how it was going to be by his wife. She expected him to be more involved with the children. Alex had the confidence that he could handle the extra commitments. He told himself that it was just about stepping up and doing it for your family. He could handle it. He had worked long hours before. It was a big effort and when the 2nd and 3rd child came along, the extra effort increased. When the children were babies, Alex would do the 4am feed before going to milk. This allowed his wife to sleep from midnight to 7 am. At night, he cut back his hours to get back to the house by 6 p.m. Then he would spend 2 - 3 hours getting the children to bed. On the odd weekend that Alex took off, his wife wanted time away from the kids, so he spent that time looking after the children.

It worked for a few years, but after four years of working from 10 -12 hour days and 2 – 3 hours a night looking after the children, the cracks started to appear. Alex's body started to break under the strain. When he first woke up in the morning, he would move to the kitchen to make his 1st coffee of the day. He always felt flat. He used to jump out of bed excited about the new day, and now it took him longer to get into the mode. The cuts and bruises and strains that he was getting at work were not healing up like they used to and the headaches were always there. Some days the headaches were really bad, some days ok, but really common. A packet of pain killers was always in the ute with him. He managed to get to the dentist for the first time in a couple years, and the dentist was concerned with the grinding of his teeth.

Jo also wanted to get her career going again and had started to talk about going back into the workforce. Alex was dreading the day. He just didn't think he could add more onto his work day. How was he going to balance that as well?

Alex's father thought he was being silly trying to help out at home so much. His mother thought he was wonderful but always said she worried about him.

The Filipino worker appears on the yard and awakens Alex from his thoughts. "You OK boss?" Alex replies "hmm yeah". He fumbles and puts down his half empty coffee cup. He turns back to the platform and starts cupping the cows again. His body's warmer now and the pain in his right side was starting to reduce. "It is a big day today, lots to do", Alex tries to convince himself to get going. The regional council is out today to check the effluent system. Alex counted in his head that he had 5 consents on this farm. There was a consent for the stock water bore, one for the irrigation, one for the effluent, one for the quarry, and then there was the consent just to have a farm. It was Alex's favourite

joke with his father, “You had it easy in your day. You could do anything you wanted on your farm. Drain a swamp, cut down scrub (native forests), tell your staff to piss off or walk around naked”. The smile appeared on his face, recalling the joke in his head.

He turns and adjusts buttons on the control panel behind him and he speeds the platform up. His arms are freer now and he’s able to cup faster. He thinks of the paperwork he still needs to complete for health and safety, employment agreements, recording hours for the employment requirements, environmental records, and the list goes on. He left school to get away from paper work but finds he is doing more and more each year. Still, you have to do it as the implications of not keeping up with it can be costly.

It had changed a lot from when his father employed staff. Alex thinks of his father’s attitude to staff problems. The conversations were always short. Alex had once told his dad “I have a problem with a worker who keeps sleeping in”, and Alex’s Dad had quipped back, “just tell him to pack his bags and piss off”. Alex had said, “you can’t do that anymore Dad”, and his Dad had shot back with “Why not? It’s your farm - just tell ‘em to go”.

The 1000 cow share-milking job had been profitable over the last few years. 2013-14 were amazing years on a cash basis. On a down side, land prices also increased as fast as Alex could save money. As entertainment, Alex did the numbers in his head as he cupped cows.

| Value of an Average Dairy Farm 2016 | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| | | \$/ha | Ha | Total Land | |
| | Average value | \$ | 40,000 | 120 | \$ 4,800,000 |
| | | | | | |
| | stock | No. | Value/hd | Total | |
| | MA cows | 420 | \$ 1,400 | \$ 588,000 | |
| | Heifers | 84 | \$ 600 | \$ 50,400 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Plant | | | \$ 100,000 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Total value of 1st farm | | | \$ 5,538,400 | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Quick Budget Average Dairy Farm Status Quo 2017 | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | Income | \$5.50 payout | 1,120 | KgMS/ha | |
| | KgMS | | | | |
| | 134,400 | \$ 5.50 | | \$ 739,200 | |
| | Stock sale | \$ 0.40 | | \$ 53,760 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Costs | \$ 4.00 | | \$ 537,600 | |
| | | | | | |
| | EBIT | | | \$ 255,360 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Plant replacement | | | \$ 20,000 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Surplus before debt servicing | | | \$ 235,360 | |
| | | | | | |
| | 8% interest costs debt that farm can support | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | Debt % | | 53% | \$ 2,942,000 | |
| | | | | | |
| | Equity % | | 47% | \$ 2,596,400 | |

| Number of Cows Required to Buy an Average NZ Dairy Farm | | | | |
|---|----------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| | \$/head | | No. Cows required | |
| | \$ 1,400 | | 1,855 | |
| | \$ 1,600 | | 1,623 | |
| | \$ 1,800 | | 1,442 | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

The numbers are hardwired into his head. He gets closer to the dream and then it moves away. It is like chasing rainbows. He grits his teeth and carries on. Alex moves his attention to the radio humming at the edge of the cowshed. He listens to the news and hears on the radio how the immigration office is reducing the number of foreign people working in the dairy industry. He mutters to himself, “there goes my work force. I might be milking these cows all by myself soon”. Alex had half his staff from foreign countries now. He found that most New Zealand people that he wanted to employ, didn’t want to work in the conditions he offered.

Alex looked for two things in the people he wanted to employ. They had to be “good people” and they had to be “productive”. “Good people” for Alex, means that they have to turn up for work already having eaten and clothed; they need to take responsibility; be honest; and if they are annoyed by the people they are working with, they need to be able to have a conversation with the other person. He says you know what a good person is. It’s the person you want to be around. “Productive” is easy - it means you get things done and to a good standard. Alex at interviews would say “we want good productive people. There is no point being a great person and getting nothing done and on the flip side there is no point being massively productive and an arsehole”. Easy to say.... but it’s a lot harder to find good, productive people to work in a situation where the hours can be over 60 hours a week. Alex now runs a 12 days on - 2 days off roster, but this is not good enough to attract good people who have lots of other great jobs to choose from.

Alex’s workers love the job and working for Alex but it is still not enough to attract good people into dairying. On a positive note, he can now speak Espanola and a bit of Pilipino. It might be useful if he ever gets a holiday.

Alex finishes off milking the first herd and looks back into the darkness of the yard. The second herd moves in past the backing gate. “Another 500 cows to milk”, he mumbles to himself. “I can’t wait for this milking to be over. I can’t wait for a day off. After 20 years, there has to be a better way. I don’t want to be one of those farmers that sits in the house all day and never milks - like they are some Lord in the manor - never leading their team. It’s just wrong. There has to be a better way to make it easy for all of us”.

B. Dairy farm land prices

* Dairy farm land prices increase 9%

Prior to 2011/12 Table 5.2 used data from Quotable Value (QV) on a calendar year. Dairy farm land sales are now based on data provided by the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) on a seasonal basis. Raw data provided by REINZ have been weighted by the number of farms in each region. The farms sold are considered to be economic units.

The weighted average sale price of dairy farms increased to \$5.23 million in 2014/15 (Table 5.2). The weighted average sale price per hectare of \$39,577 increased 8.8% on the previous season.

Table 5.2: Trend in dairy land sale values since 2009/10

| Season | Number of dairy farms sold | Weighted average sale price (\$) | Inflation Adjusted average sale price (\$) | Weighted average land area (ha) | Weighted average sale price/ha (\$) | Inflation adjusted average sale price/ha (\$) | Weighted average sale price/KgMS (\$) | CPI |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 2009/10 | 90 | 4,113,264 | 4,491,280 | 130 | 31,653 | 34,562 | 39 | 1,099 |
| 2010/11 | 143 | 4,119,017 | 4,272,100 | 126 | 32,735 | 33,952 | 38 | 1,157 |
| 2011/12 | 157 | 4,514,365 | 4,638,046 | 139 | 32,376 | 33,263 | 41 | 1,168 |
| 2012/13 | 197 | 4,375,251 | 4,464,542 | 130 | 33,557 | 34,241 | 36 | 1,176 |
| 2013/14 | 312 | 5,174,010 | 5,195,659 | 142 | 36,369 | 36,521 | 42 | 1,195 |
| 2014/15 | 244 | 5,228,018 | 5,228,018 | 132 | 39,577 | 39,577 | 44 | 1,200 |

Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ), Statistics New Zealand

New Zealand Dairy Statistics 2014-15, DairyNZ, pg 50

The NeXt Generation - Main points

- Since the 1990's land prices were going up as fast as share-milkers were raising capital.
- Larger scale farming and intensive systems were seen as a way to build equity faster.
- Share-milkers were sometimes stuck in a physically demanding, intensive job for long periods of time and their bodies and minds started to feel the strain. The result of this was burnout, and highly trained, capable people left the industry without fully realising their potential. The Share-milk or manager who was tired of the slog, started to "sit in the house" and not milk - which is another form of failure. It took the highly skilled person away from the decision making. And as a result, performance of the farm dropped.
- Farmers were now dealing with multiple staff. More people and new laws, meant farmers needed a different set of skills than their fathers and grandfathers needed.
- People sometimes felt trapped in their jobs, with no way to get out of a bad situation. Leaving could affect their career, financial success and in the case of immigrants, their visa status. They could be trapped in an abusive situation.
- Farmers became more reliant on an immigrant workforce, which can be considered risky, as legislation could change the supply of these people.
- Society's expectations around child care and helping with house life had changed, which results in the farmer being expected to spend more time at home supporting their family. He/she no longer has the freedom of time to work a 70 – 80 hours a week on the farm. It is common that the non farming partner often has their own career and these different needs create tension in farming couples. (*Interview notes*) A belief has developed in society that mothers are not achieving unless they are contributing to the workforce. There is also a desire to express themselves outside childcare and the family home. (*Interview notes*)
- Socialising with friends often meant travelling and that comes with a financial cost. In the past, farmers had socialised with neighbours or around rugby - which cost less.
- People's expectations around living standards and housing had increased.

- There was less support from the rural community because of the changes in the interaction between neighbours - especially if the farmer had no children to link with other people.
- Changing social values meant that children were no longer able to be left alone at home for long periods of time or welcome in the workspace. Childcare and work on farms had separated into two separate needs - not merged into one like it once was.
- Low level burnout started with headaches on rest days and then lead to restlessness and an inability to enjoy the job as they once did. There were increasing signs of stress-related health issues.
- Farmers found that social licence and compliance, meant that there was less freedom to act as they had in the past. There was now a higher level of structure, skill and professionalism required to run a successful dairy business. There was also a greater liability and responsibility to owners than once was. Compliance also comes with increase in labour costs. For example, running a travelling irrigator, instead of having the effluent run off the yard into a two pond effluent system, adds to the intensity of the workload and the need to do more from the same amount of people.
- The modern dairy farmer's work habits and diets made most farmers weight change dramatically over the season. It was a common joke around farmers that their weight would mirror the condition score of their cows. In the winter they would put on weight, only to drop weight over spring. The problem was, that as they got older, they lost the same amount of weight in the spring but put on a lot more weight during the rest of the year. There is a need to educate farmers in new eating practices, so as to allow them to perform at peak physical and mental conditions.

Alex needed a rest... but how? How can we make dairy farming sustainable for our teams?

The “Y Do We Want To Do A Job That Takes Over Your Life?” Generation

Jacob left school at 18 and started to look around for full time employment. He had grown up on a farm until he was 12, so enjoyed the farming life. He liked being outside and liked animals, so when Alex, a local share-milker, advertised a job, he rang up, provided his CV and organised an interview. Jacob had done well at school and enjoyed playing sport. He had good grades but didn't want to go to university for further study. So a job it was. Jacob was looking for a good career where he could:

- Have flexibility with his time so he could be with friends and family – including access to friends through his phone;
- Learn quickly lots of skills and as soon as he had mastered one set, move onto the next;
- Have a variety of different jobs within a job;
- Have a feeling of ownership and being able to try his ideas – opportunities to be creative.
- He wanted to have a good leader and to feel part of a team with a culture of “we are all equal here”.
- He expected to be treated with respect.
- If the job didn't fit his outcomes, he didn't want to wait. He was happy to leave and find a job that did.

The interview went ok until...

Jacob - You want me to work for twelve days straight until I get a day off?”

Alex - Yes that's what we do around here. It is pretty good compared to the rest of the dairy industry. Some jobs have only one day off a month”.

Alex – We have a strictly no cell phone policy at work

Jacob – That won't work - how will I contact my friends?

Alex – You can talk to them after work.

Jacob – What would my on and off farm training be like?

Alex – Off the job you can do ITO if you want, but you have to pay for it. I try to start people slow. You can do cups off for the first 3 months and after that, you can progress to cups on.

Jacob – So will I get a chance to do pasture management later this year.

Alex - Hell no. I am the only one that does the grazing and the mating is my responsibility and no-one else.

Jacob – So you say the salary is \$40,000 per year plus house, and you want me to work 50 to 70 hours a week - so that's about \$13.88 an hour?

Alex – Yes, that sounds about right but you get the house for free and some free meat.

Alex - The idea is, if you work really hard you can buy your own farm one day.

Jacob - Ok so how much money do I need to buy a farm?

Alex does the math in his head.

Alex - About \$2,000,000 in equity on today's market

Jacob – Hmm - OK I will think about it. Then silence.

Jacob weighed up his options and decided that owning his own farm one day was just fanciful. He wanted a job where he could spend time with his friends and family, a job where he could learn and a job that allowed him to have a go and test his new skills. Other jobs in the local area offered 40 – 50 hours a week with a starting wage of \$16 to \$20 per hour. It meant he could still play sport on weekends and make a good life for himself. Jacob thought to himself “Why would I want to work 50 to 80 hours a week for what seems like a low hourly rate?” He did not understand the free house and meat thing. He just wanted to know how much he was going to get paid? “It would take over my life and for what?”

People born after the year 2000 (Millennials) want to know how the occupation that they are working in, will deliver what they want. How can the business serve their career?

“Rather than one long job for life, Millennials understand the need for continuous skills development to remain employable” – “Millennials have redefined job security as career security”. Millennial Careers: 2020 Vision – Facts Figures and Practical Advice from Workforce Experts – Manpower Group (www.manpowergroup.com)

“At SIDE 2006, Peter Sheehan a Generation Y specialist, made the comment that if the dairy industry thought 12 (days) on and 2 (days off) was a good roster it, (the dairy industry) needed to get real. 5 and 2 was the bench mark. This comment was made by an outside professional who was extremely surprised at the dairy workers accepting this standard”. A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO STAFFING IN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY - SIDE, Richard Kyte, 2008

The Good, The Bad And The Ugly (Survey Results)

The aim of the survey was to get a current perspective of farming life from the people in the front line of the dairy industry.

The 2013 Federated Farmers survey suggested that the average hours worked on farms is 51 hours per week. <http://www.fedfarm.org.nz/publications/media-releases/article.asp?id=1597#.V1OB4ZF96Uk> I wanted to test the range of this statistic from the employee perspective.

The survey was sent out to several different dairy farming groups that tend to relate to younger people employed on dairy farms.

There was a total of 62 people surveyed.

58% of people surveyed had non-management/ownership roles.

49% of people surveyed had been on their present farm for under two years.

70% of people surveyed came from the South Island.

47% of people surveyed were under 30 years of age and 79% of people surveyed were under 40 years of age.

Hours worked over 55 hours per week

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Winter | 21% |
| Spring | 71% |
| Summer | 43% |
| Autumn | 37% |

98% of people surveyed worked longer than 8 hours per day on days worked.

17% had only one break during the day of up to one hour

54% of people get 1.5 days off per week on average (12% do not get regular time off)

51% of people had taken 1 full week off at one time in the last 6 months. 7% had not taken 1 full week in the last 5 years.

73% of people surveyed recorded their hours. Only 21% of those surveyed thought that their employers recorded hours that they worked. (The question may have been misleading as employees may be recording hours on behalf of the employer)

Question 1.

Have you missed any work-related or personal events that you wanted to attend in the past year? If yes, what were the events?

27 of the 62 respondents said they had missed events and 7 said they missed no events.

Some events that were missed – *Best friend wedding, mates 21st, birthdays, kids sport, school events, discussion groups, less time spend with family, weddings, special dinners, getting a girlfriend, family birthdays, school reunions, holidays with family and friends, Christmas, community gatherings, ITO training, church activities, children school activities, sport commitments, DairyNZ training days, 30th birthday, “To many events to list”.*

- The structured nature of dairy farming can make it difficult to be part of a normal social group. Flexibility in work schedule would create a better balance. It is not so much about having “town hours”. It’s about having flexibility to do the important things.

Question 2

Do you think your health suffers from your current hours of work? If yes, please provide more detail including examples?

14 respondents said their Dairy job did not affect their health and 11 said yes it did.

Responses included: *Tired all the time, I have minor accidents at work due to working long hours and not enough rest, mental tiredness, stress and weight gain. Yes, but I love my job and choose my hour. Yes, fatigue always, rarely get enough sleep. Always slaved - flat stick from 4am to 6pm. Tired all the time, sore back, neck and shoulders. Feet issues, fatigue, stress, lack of appetite. Always tired. It used to severely affect my health. I lose a lot of weight. Less sleeping and rest hours, I become very stressed. I don’t get to play sports I’m too tired.*

- The modern dairy work habits on some farms can negatively affect people’s health
- Farmers have sleep deprivation and erratic sleep patterns.
- There is less physical activity, with lots of sitting on motorbikes and tractors or standing in one place to milk cows
- Changes in body weight seem common - either putting on weight or dropping weight
- Some people on farms are able to keep good physical fitness
- It can be hard to play sport because people are too tired or can’t get regular time off.

Question 3

Do you think you have a fair amount of time off work with family and friends? If no, what is the impact of this on your close relationships?

Five people were happy with time off and 10 people said it affected their relationships. One person said maybe.

Responses were: *Family suffers as I am away a good proportion of the time, stress on relationship due to lack of quality time, we get distant -I am a farm manager of family farm, so it is an accepted part of the lifestyle. We vary the schedule according to circumstances. At present I am operating solo as my assistant is on extended sick leave. Not ideal but we make the most of the time we do have as a family - Yes but I chose to work to get ahead. I also enjoy it. Yes it does - I have enough time. Yes I get enough time. Missing out on kid's school and family time. Makes my marriage last longer as I have less time to argue with the missus. Nope roster 11 on 3 off. May sound shitty but it f***s your social/love life, have lost friends cause of work. Have lost people I loved cause of work - not being able to spend enough time with them, it takes an impact. I don't have much of a social life cause of work. Not too bad but not much of a life, and I miss out on a fair bit because of the roster and non-flexible days off. I can't ask for a day off - I get told to toughen up. Same with "rostered sleep-ins" - I haven't had one this season and I've been here from calving through to dry-off. Shitty management don't help. I miss family events or am late to them or have to leave early because of the early start. Less time to relax and socialize minimize stress. I only have time for kids and not much more - it is part of being self-employed and working with my partner, it is what I signed up for and my Family and friends tend to plan around days off. I lose my social life and almost no time to my family and friends. They starting to get away from me in a way there's a gap - a big gap. Yes, I did get enough time off, being a summer student and only working for three months over summer - I found it easy with a 6/2 roster to be off work or arrange time off when I needed and I was quite happy to work more (money for a student), I may have had less time but staff were always willing to work around anything I had on.*

- There is a real feeling that the job was affecting their family life and personal life. In the society of today that isn't so dairy farming friendly, it is hard to make our work habits fit into what would now be called a normal social life. The conflict between work and family/friends creates stress or tension in relationships.
- The traditional culture of a self-employed owner working with his/her family is still there.
- There is a call for more flexible work times
- If dairy farms are running with typically "just enough" farming staff levels, it is hard to bring more people in to cover when people are sick. There is a culture of: you should always work - whether you are sick, tired or have days off. It comes out of the one-person owner/share-milker farm culture. Traditionally if you are a one-man band there is no one else, so I just have to do the job.
- There is a general feeling that they were under stress from their job.

Question 4

Would you say that your work environment is professional? If no, what things do you think are unprofessional?

16 responded Yes it was a professional place to work and 10 responded No it was not professional place to work.

Responses included: *No. the boss treats me as if I'm lucky to have my job. Makes me do dangerous jobs and has lack of empathy for his staff. I operate a professional family business. Very professional, I have*

relaxed employers (share-milkers) that are around most days and the relationship is casual but professional. No - have just spent the year from hell working alongside someone who regards all females as 'just hobby farmers' (his exact words!) and treated me like shit. No - Being treated like a number not a person. No communication, no meetings, no set way to apply for time off. Not all the time but it's nice sometimes. A lot of joking at times. No because the senior staff just do whatever they like and the boss doesn't do anything about it so I end up so tired everyday milking the whole herd cleaning the shed doing all farm works without help. Relationships with the worker is moody, the manager communicates with the worker in a moody way. Reasonably, but older bosses see it as it used to be and does it the old way. No - slavery work environment. We get it done but it's more casual.

- There are farms that are very professional
- Some farms are very unprofessional
- There is still the “old school” mentality of staff management coming through
- Some leaders have the ability to have a lot of fun as they work with their team
- Some managers think that looking “pissed off” is a valid management technique to get change in people. Often staff have no idea why they are upset. The behaviour just creates a negative team feel and poorer performance.
- Sexism can also be present and is very damaging to the person receiving the abuse.

Question 5

Have you had a time when you really enjoyed your job as a Dairy farmer? If yes, what was it that you really enjoyed at that time?

*Responses included: Enjoy it all. I enjoy calving. Yes, the days where nothing goes wrong and the boss is not treating me like crap. I often enjoy the job. Assisting a cow struggling to calve. Just watching grass grow. A nicely timed rain or prolonged sunny period. When an animal weighing 1\2 a ton rests their nose on your shoulder for a scratch. Every day is enjoyable - having experienced other jobs, this is the ideal. The freedom. The hours and also knowing what I need to do and can do whenever - there is a lot of freedom. I enjoy milking - I always want to be fast - faster than anyone in the world and I want a prize for the fastest milker in the world. Yes, seeing progress with supply, feeding supplements seeing results. Yes, mostly when making a difference with sick animals. I really enjoy being a dairy farmer - the majority of the time wouldn't change it for anything. It's more than a job to me, it's something I am truly passionate about. I like working on my own or with the missus, but I always enjoy it. Yes loved job until sexist co-worker arrived. I enjoy everything and it doesn't feel like work. Yes. Stepping into management and career progression. Yes, most of the time! For example, having good yarns while drying cows off, letting cows over to their break, helping calve cows, getting the chance to buy and lease out my own animals, having a brand new house provided, being given meat. Yep I love dairy - it's a lifestyle not a job really. Sure - it f**ks your life up but it's all good, until you are so shagged you struggle to wake up. No, not for a long time. Enjoy most things. Sunny days are always a good thing especially with the boss in a good mood.*

- Dairy farmers love the job and love the animals
- Dairy farmers love working outside on the farm
- Some dairy farmers like working with people and some like working by themselves

Question 6

Do you enjoy being a Dairy Farmer today? If yes, what do you enjoy about being a Dairy Farmer?

29 respondents said Yes and 5 people said No.

The surveyed people responded with: *Yes, love all of it. Yes, ability to see results of decisions quickly, and constantly learning new things/ways of doing things. No, the pay is not worth the time and effort put into someone else's business when they don't appreciate it. Yes, the lifestyle. Working with animals. Meeting and beating the challenges both economic and environmental. Yes, although times are tough at present in a financial sense, there is still a great sense of satisfaction in dealing with the challenges and maintaining a viable business. The lifestyle. Yes, seeing the cows happy, keeping the farm clean and safe. Working outdoors and with stock. Being outside, around the cows, being in a positive environment that encourages me to push myself every day and overcoming challenges. Doing what I want when I want, how I want, as long as it works for me, the cows and the boss. No but that should all change next week when I move to a new farm. Yes, the simplicity of an easy lifestyle for the whole family. Yes, as above and more - working outside, driving machinery, free formal qualifications, diverse cultural experiences in the workplace, learning about irrigation. Yep, dealing with animals each day – I personally love stock work i.e. yard work and tractors work, milking is an on/off love haha. Just being able to be out in the open, getting your hands dirty, you can't beat it. Yes, kept busy and getting things done. The animals keep me in it and the wide open spaces. Yes...daily jobs...and the learnings every day that I know I can use in the future. Yes, I like the environment. Helping animals when they are sick. Just love being a dairy farmer. Overcoming challenges and dealing with people. Yes, outdoors and watching the grass grow. Yes, working with animals, working with people, working outside, having a huge range of skills, seeing the sunrises in the morning, always learning new things. The whole nature of Dairy farming. Sharing stories with other like-minded people. No, horrible weather, wishing to dry off. I enjoyed the summer but I won't be making a career out of it. Yes, balanced life, limited people contact is good, quietness, working with animals. My answer is No and Yes - No at this time because I'm not happy with my employer and Yes before and tomorrow because I'm looking forward to a new place and employer. Yes, love the industry as whole. Yes, the pay is good.*

The respondents enjoyed:

- Learning
- Looking after the animals
- The challenge
- Running a complete business and having autonomy
- Working outside, being with nature
- Being safe
- Working with different cultures
- Working with people
- Also working by themselves

Question 7

What, if anything, would you MOST like to see change about your place of work?

Responses included: *Nothing. Ability to pass work down the line. Better work hours, better working conditions, better machinery. Another fulltime staff member - this would enable everyone a little more*

time off and take the day to day pressure off the work load. We would like to employ more staff, and will do so. Nothing. The Muddy track to my house. More staff to ease the work load, mostly during spring. The dairy company increase the pay out. I'd like to see more communication and less negative attitudes. Total on farm workers, no drive in workers. Nothing could be reasonably expected to change. Communication. Nothing. Better milk price to help fund more staff. For the employer to look at migrants as equals - I feel like we are still a kind of modern slave. Equal respect and treatment to all races and implement labour laws strictly on farms. Managers and employers should look after worker with a good relationship in good ways and good manners or respect to each other. More focus on people and sustainable employment. Housing should not be shared. Security of service not according to immigration policies. Milking times. Hours of work. The way employees are treated. More education for employees about what their rights are. Early starts. Nothing, I have a great team to work for, great living arrangements, good hours, I have learnt lots and it was perfect for a Lincoln University student for practical work. Have respect with all staff, set goals properly and make decent hours of work. Have a balance between life, family and work. Cutting back the work hours and more pay. I want a warmer house and more opportunity to get to social engagements.

Changes people wanted included:

- More people employed to ease the workload
- A higher milk price
- Better communication
- Better team feel
- Less prejudice - all people of different races treated the same. Tighter labour laws to protect immigrant workforce
- An understanding of the goals of the farm
- Increased respect and caring for people in the industry
- There was also a common feel that they were in a good place and nothing needed to change and it was a great place to learn.

My Recommendations For A Follow-Up Survey

- A wider group of people should be surveyed
- Questions around historical work history should be included
- A yearly survey should be conducted, focusing only on employee, contract milker and share-milker thoughts and opinions
- Better questioning around hours of work recorded
- Better questioning to determine the flow of people in and out of the dairy industry
- More defined questions around health and wellbeing
- Explore the time off/holiday in relationship to ownership versus employees

Future Predictions – With A Black Hat

Here are three grim scenarios. The intent of providing these is to clearly depict the consequences for the dairy industry (and New Zealand) if it does not deal with the farm labour issues that have been staring us in the face for over 20 years.

Prediction 1

The day is coming soon when a dairy worker will have a severe accident on a dairy farm in New Zealand and is killed. The police are called in to investigate the incident and the call goes out in national media about another farmer with a death on the land.

As the investigation unfolds, it turns out that the dairy assistant has just worked 80 hours for that week. He had started working that morning at 4am. He had had a quick lunch at 11am and no breakfast for the day. The police investigate more and after interviewing other staff members and the man's wife, it turns out that he has not had a day off work for 7 weeks.

He leaves behind a new wife and a baby on the way.

The police and Worksafe investigate the situation in more depth. It turns out there has been no proper recording of hours worked, no health and safety process. They move to prosecute the manager, the farm owner and the directors (which in this case is the wife and son).

The media picks up the story. They run headlines such as:

Dairy Slave Killed on Farm.

Wife Left a Widow After Dairy Farm Slavery – Call for Dairy Industry to Compensate

Time for Action to Change Dairy Farm Worker Abuse

Labour Sweeps to Power Vowing to Make Change in Dairy Industry

Call for Unions to be Reinstated to Protect Farm Workers

Prediction 2

The New Zealand dairy industry will continue to lose good productive people from the workforce if the we do not start improving the way we employ people and who we employ. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. As we employ unsuitable people, we say to ourselves "People are no good these days", we get frustrated and start to treat all staff the same way - with contempt. The Pygmalion Effect determines that people will rise or fall to your expectations. If we expect them to be poor they will be poor. If you expect them to be great they will be great.

We must break the cycle!

Prediction 3

In the light of constant media reports highlighting the poor working conditions in New Zealand dairy industry, human rights activists are calling for a ban to New Zealand milk products around the world.

The prime minister has set up an urgent inquiry after the latest issues have come to light. The government makes plans to pass new laws dissolving the share milking system and puts in stringent Health and Safety laws on all farms to protect workers' rights.

Make a change or change will be forced on us.

"We need to look at various ways our thinking does not work" Edward De Bono, Think Before it is too Late, 2012.

It Was A Wonderful Period In Our History

The dream of our dairy industry has been “if we work hard and are careful with our money, we can buy our own farm one day”. It is a great egalitarian story of the hard working people making good and finding their place in the world. It is a dream of providing safety for your family, a place to grow your children and a place where your world is your own. You make the rules. It is your farm, your little country within a country. It is a wonderful story that has been a real success for many people. At times it has been very difficult, with economic factors and political (Rogernomics) instabilities over this period but people survived through determination, grit and hard work. There have been real success stories. It has been the success story of many people from all walks of life, whether highly trained intellectuals, or people who started farming after leaving school at 15 years old.

We should not turn our backs on what has been created, but rather look at the present reality and decide which way to go. We need to leap forward from what has come before and make it better.

The All Blacks say “GO FOR THE GAP - When you’re on top of your game, change your game”. Legacy, James Kerr, 2013

“If we work hard we will own our own farm one day”. It was once a reality for many New Zealanders to work through the system and buy their own farm but the process has become bottle-necked. The rise in dairy farm values in relation to incomes has made it very difficult to follow the path of share-milking to farm ownership.

We have been employing people under our dream of farm ownership for the last 100 years. The pattern of success was as simple as the dream that has been ground into our psyche - Work hard equals farm ownership.

It has created a situation where long hours of work have been accepted as a cultural norm.

“Everything I have done has been to achieve one thing, farm ownership”. (Interview Notes)

“The reality is that a vast majority of employees are not going to achieve this (farm ownership) outcome.” A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO STAFFING IN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY SIDE, Richard Kyte, 2008

Interestingly, since Richard Kyte made this statement in 2008 the price of land has increased by circa \$7,500 per hectare of dairy land or a 15% in the period from 2008 to 2015.

In 2005/06 there were **2,719** 50/50 sharemilkers and in 2014/15 **2050** (New Zealand Dairy Statistics 2015/16 pg 28). That is a drop of 700 jobs available from the share-milking path. There are less farms

that have sharemilking jobs available which has created more limitations around moving through the sharemilking system to farm ownership.

“There is a thought that the values of dairy farms are not sustainable and maybe created on a false market of capital gains rather than cash returns.” New Zealand Dairy Farm Debt, Bruce Greig, 2010.

“The Ponzi scheme has reached the tipping point” (*Interview Notes*)

Telling people that are working in the dairy industry that if they forgo income, social engagement and their personal health - because one day they will own their own farm - is now an empty promise that we can no longer give our next generation. They see through it. It does not fool the best, it only fools the desperate. The result is that we attract into the industry, people who are desperate for work rather people who are really good and want to work in the dairy industry.

Once we accept that farm ownership is an unlikely outcome, then we are free to think about new ways to attract and employ great people in the dairy industry.

Where Does This Cultural Change Come From?

We heard the “own your own farm promise” from our grandparents, our parents and our bosses. They are successful people, they have their own farms - so they must be right. It comes from the people we trust. They wouldn’t lie so we assume that what they are saying must be correct. They also tell their story from their own personal experience so that proves the techniques have worked for them. They are sincere and truthful about the pathways to farm ownership mantra.

The economic factors surrounding dairy farms leading up to the 1990’s, created a situation where an individual (or farming couple) could focus on an intense period of working - usually over a 10 years period - to obtain their first farm. (*Interview Notes*) During this time, the couple would have worked sometimes up to 80 – 90 hours a week and they would have been very controlled with their personal spending and farm spending - often operating on a cash basis. For example, if there was no money in the bank, they did not spend. (*Interview Notes*)

The next generation hears a story of how if they worked hard, their career will develop and they will be successful. They will be “Happy” once they get there.

We need to rewrite the story, so that our children (the next generation) are allowed to follow their own path in dairy farming, and yes, it will most likely be different. Rewrite the culture to suit the changing economic reality. Write a culture that has our people looking after their families, looking after their health and being in a job that they love.

Bigger Faster Harder – Burnout

One of the off-shoots of our drive to own our own farm, was the drive to move through the ranks. It is a perceived need to keep moving forward. “If you are not moving forward you are failing” (*Interview Notes*)

A friend of mine that was not from a rural background once stated “It sounds like a prison sentence - you talk about it only being for three years and then you can have a life”. I was justifying why I had to work 70 - 80 hours a week. I was saying it was only for three years and once I finish the contract, I would be able drop my hours of work back.

A drystock friend of mine challenged me on the way the dairy industry operates. “So you work really hard for 10 to 15 years so that when you get your own farm, you can take it easy and make someone else work really hard. Wouldn’t it be easier if everyone just worked a normal amount all the time? It’s kind of a form of bullying.”

Most teachers don’t become a teacher to one day become a head master. Teachers tend to become a teacher to teach children. People become electricians to be a really good electrician. Most people don’t become electricians to own their own electrical business.

The path is well defined – Dairy Assistant - Herd Manager - Assistant Manager – Farm Manager, Contract Milker, Share-milker, Equity Manager, Land Owner. It was the dream and the promise that it will be better once you have made it. The answer is to move up the ranks. Once I get to the next role it will be easier and it will all make sense. Next season we will have fixed the issues and it will be better if we just get through this.

It is OK to just love being a Dairy Farmer, whatever role you have? Lets allow people to look after their family/friends, look after their health and have a job they enjoy. We can stop good people burning out and dropping out of the industry - leaving the desperate and the tough. Don’t wait for next season because next season has its new challenges.

You Need To Do What I Did To Succeed

“If you do not want to progress in the industry then there is something wrong with you and you are not suitable” (*Interview Notes*)

All parents want the best for their children. As a parent you try to influence your child to follow in your path. It is a natural human tendency to want to teach the next generation by steering them to follow the path that you followed, but if the world has changed, the path is no longer relevant. We still suggest or expect people to follow in our path.

There is a feeling from the employers of share-milkers and non-contract staff, that people working on our farms must “do the hard yards” (*Interview Notes*) and struggle like they did, to earn the right to succeed. If we see the historical path as no longer practical. What is the new path for our people to follow?

Set your people up to succeed - don't put barriers in their way to see if they make it.

The Loss of our Egalitarian Past When the Generations Changed

The All Blacks say: "Successful leaders balance pride with humility; absolute pride in performance; total humility before the magnitude of the task." Legacy, James Kerr, 2013

The culture of *buying your farm one day* mutates into a really negative culture of "you need to do the hard yards before I respect you" or "you need to do the hard yards before you deserve to own land or cows". (*Interview Notes*)

We have lost our cooperative roots of any person can be successful and we help each other to succeed. The need for people to follow in our path has changed. It has changed in a negative way to they don't deserve the ownership because they have not paid their dues, they have not completed the hard yards like I had too. Or they don't deserve to own land.

Our industry is turning into an elitist one where only a few can be successful - and this concept comes from the top. It comes from the leaders of the dairy industry.

"It is turning into an elitism culture where the Dairy Barons (highly successful people with lots of money) hold the power and the serfs work the land - and how dare they rise above their station. It is the barrier or excuse that keeps people in their place." (*Interview Notes*)

"We have worked hard to get to this point, we have the right" *Interview notes*

It is a cultural myth that we were sold - that working hard gives us a right to succeed. Choosing to work hard does not give us the right. It was our choice to work hard.

Working hard does not give us the right to mistreat animals, pollute the environment and mistreat our people. If New Zealand does not see a general change in attitude towards our people, our animals and the environment, New Zealand will step in and force us to change.

"I am not a fan, it is true to say, of farm employment practices, but this is actually bad for our farming industry. It is a failure in one of our most important sectors – in one of the select few industries that the Government actually fawns over, panders to, changes the minimum wages calculation for it, allows it to bring in migrant workers freely – meaning 20% of the lowest skilled jobs are filled with migrants." Helen Kelly, <http://kapitiindependentnews.net.nz/helen-kellys-column-column/>

“Elitism in the Dairy Industry is killing the industry and is a big cause of poor performance at the on-farm level. People don’t come to work to be serfs.” (Interview Notes)

The All Blacks say: “SWEEP THE SHEDS - Never be too big to do the small things that need to be done.”
Legacy, James Kerr. 2013

I suggest the Dairy Industry could use the saying “Milk the cows - Never be too big to milk the cows”

Practical Solutions So Dairy Farmers Can Do The People Thing Better

There are no silver bullets when managing people but here are some suggestions that may get you started. Don't try them all at once, and if possible, use them with help from people who are "trained in people".

- Most people in New Zealand don't want to work 50 to 80 hours per week. But if you do work long hours, it is important to have flexibility so people can get important periods of time off work. By expecting people to work long hours, you immediately cut down the number of people you are selecting from. Hourly rate gives you the ability to create flexibility in your employees work time, without other staff feeling they are doing all the work.
- The salary based system with a free house (or reduced cost), free meat etc. confuses people about what their actual pay is. It has been common practice to give free items to workers because of the ability to avoid tax. The disadvantage of paying people in this manner is that it is difficult for both parties to work out the true rate of pay. It is also illegal and can make it seem like the employer is paying under the minimum wage requirements. Also, the longer work hours in the spring and less work hours in the winter creates friction and mistrust on both sides of the employment agreement. Inevitably, the employers think the staff are not doing enough hours and employees feel they are not getting paid enough. If you look at the table below you will see the different salaries at different hourly rates.

Different Salaries (Including Market Rent) Versus Hours Worked Per Week

| Base | House | Tax on | Total | Hrs / wk | Hrs / wk | Hrs / wk | Hrs / wk |
|-----------|--------------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Salary | \$200 / week | House | Package | 65 | 60 | 55 | 50 |
| | | | Total hours | 3,120 | 2,880 | 2,640 | 2,400 |
| \$ 40,000 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 2,600 | \$ 53,000 | \$ 17.0 | \$ 18.4 | \$ 20.1 | \$ 22.1 |
| \$ 45,000 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 2,600 | \$ 58,000 | \$ 18.6 | \$ 20.1 | \$ 22.0 | \$ 24.2 |
| \$ 50,000 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 2,600 | \$ 63,000 | \$ 20.2 | \$ 21.9 | \$ 23.9 | \$ 26.3 |
| \$ 55,000 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 2,600 | \$ 68,000 | \$ 21.8 | \$ 23.6 | \$ 25.8 | \$ 28.3 |

This is taken from Stuart Taylor's presentation to DairyNZ, June 2015

- Interestingly, the market rate for unskilled labour is \$16 to \$20 per hour if we take the national average at the last Federated Farmers survey of 51 hours per week. If these stats are correct then most dairy farmers pay a higher market rate than required to make people work longer hours than normal.
- Farmers will spend money on consultants and training around grass management and financial management but we seem to think that spending money on human resource management is somehow not acceptable. It is OK to spend money to learn how to manage people and it is really

important to ask for help from HR specialists when dealing with staff employment concerns. Cows and grass are easy. With people, you're never really sure what you will get. There is a massive amount of knowledge out there on how to run high performing teams. It is OK to ask. "Great leaders do not start as great leaders. They grow into great leaders". Good to Great, Jim Collins, 2001.

- Only let the best people in. Too often we see the interview process as just another job to get done as fast as possible. "It is not a job that dairy farmers particularly enjoy". (*Interview Notes*) Take as long as it takes to get the correct person. It is not a job to just get done. Only choose the best and take your time employing people. Remember the desperate employ the desperate. Dairy farmers in New Zealand often run their farms with just the right amount of staff to get by. When someone leaves for whatever reason, it creates a situation where the farm does not have enough people to run successfully. The work load tends to be so high that we tend to grab anyone. Once they are in, the law protects them, and there is a very long process to break the employment agreement.

"Get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus". Good to Great, Jim Collins, 2001

- What I found as I started to pick better people to work in my team, was that the people that I had previously thought were good, often ended up at the bottom of the pile. Later, after seeing better performances from other people, I realised what standard I needed to accept when employing new people. Good people add to the team and you end up with better people and increased performance. Poor people take from the team and in the chaos they create, you lose good people and end up with more poor people. It affects you as a leader, and you will find that little by little the standard of behaviour you accept drops, until you accept really poor behaviour and performance.
- As a whole industry we are willing to accept poor behaviour and performance because we think we cannot employ good people. We make up lots of excuses about why we cannot obtain good people. What we need to change is how we employ people so that good people want to work with us. Use the 90-day trail (take advice on how to use it). Use fixed term contracts while you look for the correct permanent staff member.

The market for people has changed because the expectations of people have changed. We need to change so we attract and keep the best people. We cannot just sit waiting for good people to come to us.

- As farmers we are not very good at explaining expectations up front. As a leader, we inevitably set goals in our head (so much production for the year, no weeds flower, etc.) and then we drive ourselves and our teams to achieve those goals. We do this because it inspires us and we enjoy hitting the targets we create. This is one of the best things about being a farmer and running a farming business. When you share these goals with your team, they then understand the direction you want them to head and they understand how their effort contributes to achieving the farm's goals. It inspires them and gives them satisfaction when the goals are achieved.

- As farmers and New Zealanders, we are also not very good at providing feedback. Feedback is not natural for New Zealanders. We tend to say nothing when we are happy with performance and often think “they are just doing their job”. When people are not performing to our expectation, we tend to just act pissed off and hope the staff understand and change their behaviour. When they keep acting the same way, it is upsetting and we shout at them. The employee then thinks about our behaviour - “what a moody manager”, rather than changing their behaviour.

“Feedback is the breakfast of champions” The New One Minute Manager, Ken Blanchard, 2015

There are bad ways to deliver feedback and there are good ways to deliver feedback. Luckily you can learn how to give feedback that gets a positive change in your staff through rural based professionals (DairyNZ can help you be in contact with these people). Use these resources.

Acting pissed off is not a successful people management technique.

The best way to deal with poor performance is to talk about it as soon as possible. More serious performance or behaviour issues need a more formal approach and agricultural based people consultants can help you with those very difficult and technical conversations.

There is a middle ground between a really quick “in the moment” performance conversation and the legal process conversation. What can be really useful, is to have a sit-down meeting at the cowshed to spell out what the performance problem is and then write this conversation down to give to the person. This does not mean it is a formal warning or legal process of any kind - it is simply a conversation that is written down to be really clear on expectations.

- Conflict Resolution – You are going to have conflict on a dairy farm. Running a larger scale dairy farm, working with animals, the weather and multiple people, you are going to have conflict. Generally we are great at cows and grass. Then, as we succeed, we start to manage people. Cows and grass are easy; with people you never know what you will get.

The rule is “first seek to understand and then be understood” Covey Steven, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, 1989

Below is a very basic step by step guide to conflict resolution. It’s important to learn this process correctly or use an HR specialist for help (<http://www.coreconversations.co.nz> but there are many others)

Steps

1. Check your intention – for example this should be “I want to help this person or these people get along”. It shouldn’t be “let’s smash these two people”. If your intention is the later, go away, calm down and come back when not so angry).
2. State your intention e.g. “I am here to listen to you both and help you understand each other; I am not taking sides”.
3. Listen

4. Listen again
5. Repeat back what the person you were listening to just said. This check makes sure you heard them correctly. It also tells the person you are listening. Try to guess the feeling that is driving the behaviour. E.g. "you seem frustrated"
6. Listen
7. Repeat back what the person said again and ask if that was correct. Look for 3 yeses.
8. Now you should have a person that is in a mental state to start looking for solutions.

By the way, if a conversation goes wrong, it is OK to say "Sorry that came out wrong. What I meant was ..."

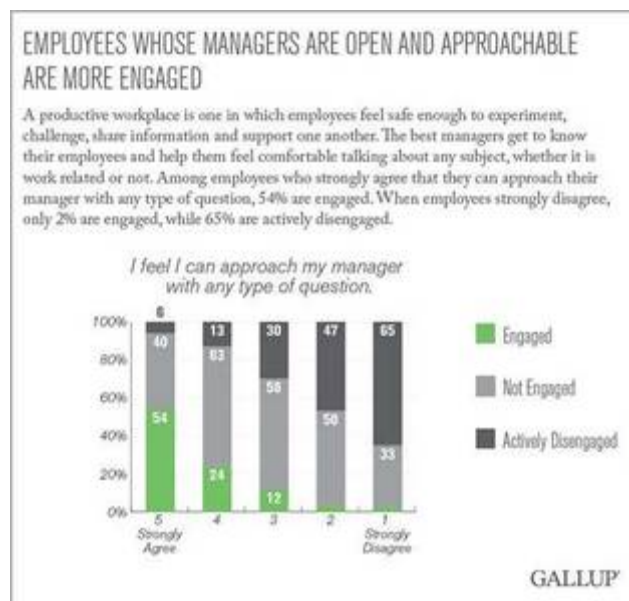
There are people that can help or teach you the techniques to deal with conflict and difficult conversation. You do not have to attempt this difficult process by yourself.

"Having the tricky communication without damaging the relationship; getting engagement with staff; building intrinsic motivation; untangling conflict; really listening; asking for what we need; getting agreement; asking the right questions; managing our own reactions; or facilitating and mediating others is the essence of dealing with people"

Jane O'Shea, www.coreconversations.co.nz

The All Blacks use: "Tetimatanga o temataurangako to wahangu, tewahangatuauakotewhakarongo. The first stage of learning is silence, the second stage is listening". Legacy James Kerr, 2013

- Listen to your people, find out what they want in life and at work. It costs nothing but has great results around employee engagement and performance. Where do you want to be? If I can, and it suits the business, how can I get you there?



<http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/182321/employees-let-managers.aspx>

- Don't expect the people you employ to want what you wanted. Don't expect them to do the things you did to achieve. They want different things. Let them do the job you employed them to do. They don't have to jump through the hoops that you had to - break the cycle.
- A good question for working conditions and Health & Safety is "would you let your children work in those conditions? If not, why would you let someone else's child work in those conditions?"
- Know why you run farms – If you want to understand your passion, and get the people in your team to understand that passion, then you need to ask yourself, "Why do I run/own dairy farms"? For example, you may want to have the best cows, the most milk produced, etc. Maybe it is that you want the tidiest farm? Maybe you want to protect the legacy of your family? Ask yourself the questions and unite your team around the message. We are passionate about (...) and we are proud of it. This gives you and your team purpose.
- Farmers can use technology to create real labour efficiency but you have to have the capital to invest and the skills and ability within the team to use that technology.
- When thinking about entering a share-milking agreement, employment agreement or contract milking agreement, both the landowner, the share-milker and/or the employee have to think "win-win or no-deal". Entering into contract arrangements that lead to one party obtaining an unfair advantage over another party will result in negative outcomes.

"Win-win sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying. We both get to eat the pie, and it tastes pretty darn good!" Stephen Covey, <https://www.stephencovey.com/7habits/7habits-habit4.php>

- What can we give our people that does not cost any money?
Staff engagement is not just about the money - it is about how we treat people. Even when we (the dairy industry) are going through low payout times, we can still provide for our people.

The Me-to-We Continuum

Five ways companies can foster better relationships with employees.



SOURCE CULTUREQ

© HBR.ORG

<https://hbr.org/2015/12/the-intangible-things-employees-want-from-employers>

1. Be consistent
2. Ask people how they are and listening to them
3. Be fair

4. Make it a team
 5. Train people and get them to where they want to be
- Being a team leader is an emotional role that triggers most of our primal stress drivers. No leader has all the answers. No one can say the right thing all the time in every situation to get the best outcome. What you can do is pause. This gives you time to think and you are more likely to have a better outcome. Do not think you have to react in the moment with people all the time. The best technique I have been taught, and I use all the time, is to ask a question.

Let me explain in a real situation. Three dairy assistants come charging up to their boss. “What should we do - should we move the cows first or the heifers first?” They are emotional and in a hurry.

You need time to think but they are expecting the answer right now so you feel the pressure of making the correct answer. It feels like a challenge of your leadership. Don’t just fire off an answer. Ask them a question.

“Right, so what you are asking me is which herd should be moved first - what do you guys think? John you first and then James and then Sue”.

While they are answering the question you have time to form a plan and make the right choice.

“Between stimulus and response there is a space, in that space we get to choose our response”.
Man’s Search for Meaning, Victor Frankl, 1946

The space gives us time to react in a way that will get the best result and outcome with the people in our team.

Another really important time to use this technique, is when you have been off the farm and you come back and things are different than you expected. Your anger is rising and it feels like you have been let down. “Why can’t I just get one day off and it go well”? The temptation is to start firing verbal shots at your team.

Stop – Ask lots of open questions without making any accusations – collect all the information – think about it – then react in an appropriate way.

(Nine times out of ten, if you act on emotion without all the facts, you will look like a fool because you have either blamed the wrong person, the team had no choice, or it was a mistake that you made yourself. The team loses respect for you and performance drops.)

Collect the information – make an informed decision – get the team to be a part of the problem solving – don’t blame one person (unless it is a disciplinary issue - then follow that path correctly) – make the event a learning process rather than fire shots.

- Success with people is not just intelligence; it is knowing yourself and other people as well. Emotional intelligence is “the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically”. Anon.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotional_intelligence

“Managing other people is 95% of managing yourself, 5% of people cannot be managed” Stuart Taylor, Leadership in the Rural Sector, authors Simon Gibson and Matt Pickering, 2014

The All Blacks say: “Know thyself – Keep it real”. Legacy, James Kerr, 2013

“All of the above will only be of value if the dairy industry continues to follow a path of good employment. We can’t afford to let a few bad employers jeopardize this valuable resource (young people) to us all”. Barbara Kuriger, <https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/5989>

The Work Place Action Plan by DairyNZ and Federated Farmers needs a special mention, as it outlines from an industry point of view, what is required for a dairy farmer to be successful when employing people.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF GOOD PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

A quality workplace builds on the strength of the firm foundations created by complying with the law. DairyNZ and Federated Farmers are clear that we are not supporting only the bare minimum because accepting the lowest common denominator is insufficient to attract, develop, reward and retain the highly skilled and motivated people we need.

The explanations of the five pillars of good people management in the page opposite sign-post these minimum legal requirements by ▼.



6 | SUSTAINABLE DAIRYING: WORKPLACE ACTION PLAN

<http://www.dairynz.co.nz/about-us/dairy-industry-strategy/sustainable-dairying-workplace-action-plan/>

Conclusion

Economic, social and political (social licence) changes in the New Zealand over the last 30 years means that the traditional ways of employing people on dairy farms and the hours they work are no longer successful - both from an economic perspective as well as a social perspective. We need to learn and use the best techniques to empower, grow and protect our people and families.

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Final comment (from the survey)

“Cheers brah for letting me do this survey, it’s awesome someone listened”.