

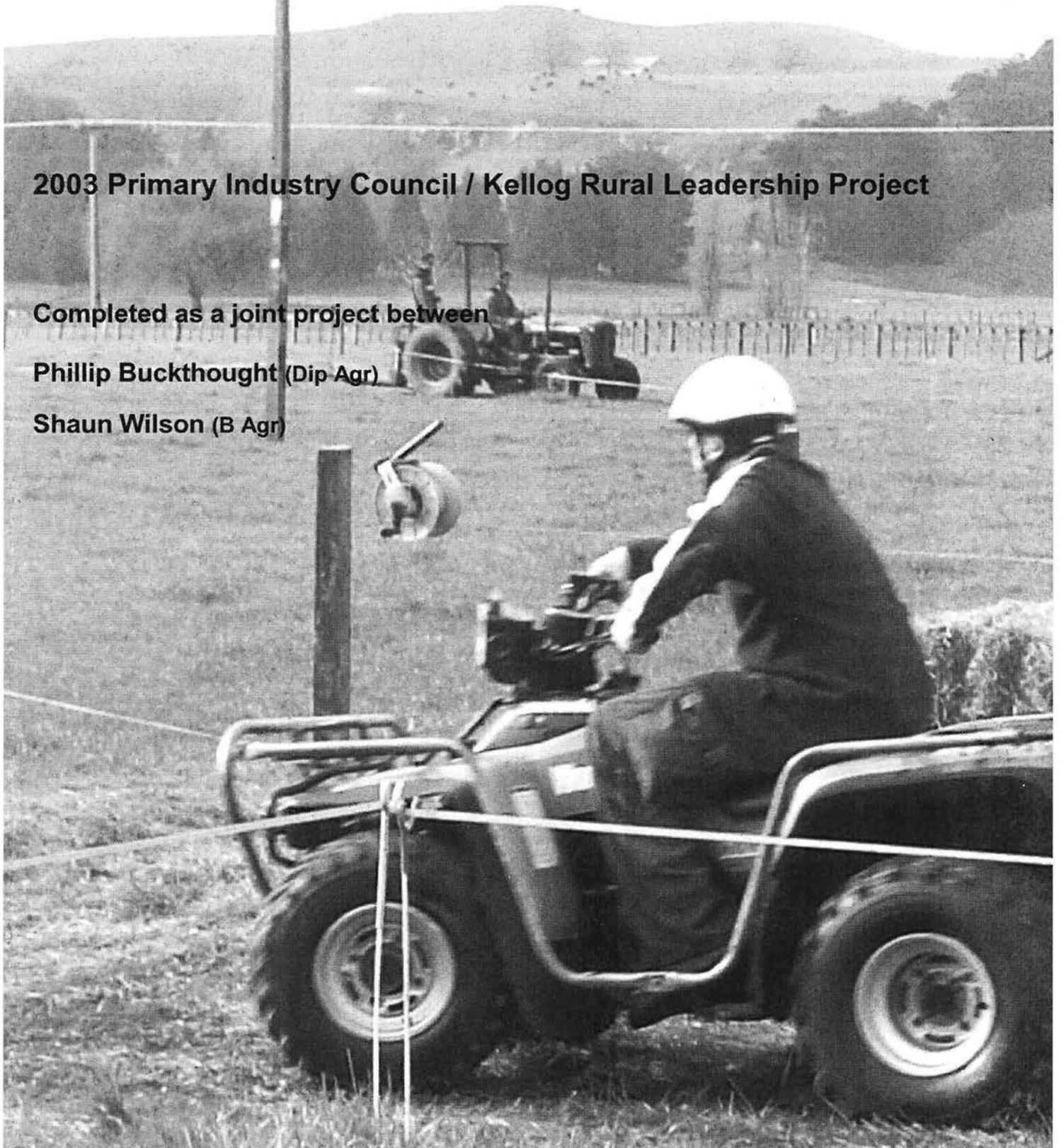
# Training our Future Farmers

2003 Primary Industry Council / Kellogg Rural Leadership Project

Completed as a joint project between

Phillip Buckthought (Dip Agr)

Shaun Wilson (B Agr)



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## Executive Summary

Effective training whether in the classroom or alongside the employer is vital for the future viability of any industry and we have yet to achieve the optimum for the agriculture sector.

These regional "Pre employment" training initiatives operating within the schools are an effective variation of what has traditionally been provided by many of our polytechnics. The ability to merge training for your chosen career, while still under the umbrella of the school system, enables young people to learn the important basics of farming without having the stresses of full time employment and the commitments that go with that.

We have highlighted, with regard to our two case studies the need for effective leadership, organisation and direction, backed by the local community, to enable these types of training facilities to work effectively.

We whole heartedly endorse the concept and urge the industry and farmers support the growth of regional pre employment training initiatives in a coordinated and appropriate manner.

However there are a number of broader issues that need addressing to lift the skill and capacity of the agricultural workforce over time.

The challenges many farmers feel they face in training employees on farm needs to be acknowledged and addressed, as does the lack of value that many employers and employees place on training. This will primarily be influenced by the quality, relevance and flexibility of training that is provided.

Until the agricultural industry improves the perception of the industry as a quality workplace and career option we are unlikely to attract increasing numbers of suitable employees. Care must be taken that the image we portray is matched by our attitudes and practices on farm. Issues such as hours of work and others must be given the appropriate consideration by farmers if we are going to meet the expectations of employees and those who support them in making their career choices.

Improvements will not come without farmers and industry playing their respective roles and being prepared to identify and challenge views and attitudes that may be limiting achieving the capacity we require in our future workforce.

## Overview

Phillip Buckthought has been involved in the Dairy Industry for 25 years beginning as a farm cadet and progressing to farm ownership and is currently looking at opportunities within equity partnerships and joint ventures to expand his farming operation.

Shaun Wilson has spent 18 years working through the large herd management pathway to share milking and has recently exited dairying to pursue interests in private consultancy, specifically interested in dairy industry promotional activities and employment practices.

Both contributors have been involved in assisting young people access training before beginning a career in the dairy sector. From conversations during the Kellogg's rural leadership course at Lincoln it was felt the project presented an opportunity to better understand what factors had influenced the development of recent community based pre employment training initiatives and how these could survive into the future. Indeed there was evidence within the group that such information might well be useful to other groups or communities that were considering similar initiatives.

The project sought to achieve the following

- Consider the factors that influence training for the agricultural sector
- Provide case study examples of the successful development of community based pre employment training initiatives for high school students
- Identify the key factors for the successful development and delivery of these types of pre employment courses

The following steps have been used in completing this report

- Background reading and research to gain a basic insight into the framework within which training is conducted within New Zealand
- Discussions with a variety of people involved in the provision of Agricultural Industry training
- Case Studies of two Waikato based pre employment training initiatives

## Introduction

### Is there a need for training?

Dairy InSight on behalf of NZ dairy farmers last year directed 12% of its budget towards activities that support and influence the quality and quantity of people that the sector attracts, trains and retains. Training is but one component of this response but it is clearly seen to be an important one when you consider comments made by industry leaders in one recent study.

"Shortage of suitably qualified and motivated staff" (1)

"Skill shortage both specific to industry and life skills" (1)

However when one looks to the number of opportunities that exist for individuals and organisations to deliver and receive training one might ask why this remains such an issue for our industry.

The Agriculture ITO has been providing training for those employed within the industry for many years through on the job training and an ever expanding network of private and polytechnic training establishments. They currently quote dairy 3100 trainees accessing courses that they facilitate.

A recent study conducted by the University of Sydney looking at “Dairy Employment for the future” (2) focusing on their local industry provides extensive parallels to the New Zealand dairy sector and demonstrates that these issues are not just unique to New Zealand. Within that report training was an area identified as requiring ongoing focus and development and specifically suggested looking at ways in which

- more productive relationships can be developed between training colleges and farm operations
- to investigate options for establishing working training farms which provide intensive front end training and exposes trainees to a wide range of practices and technologies under care/training of accredited professional farmer/master

### **Why are more farmers not using formal training?**

There are many factors that would appear to influence how people will access and use training. In discussions with farmers and industry participants the comment “One size does not fit all” is frequently used. There would appear to be a wide range of factors influencing this matter.

- How training is valued by employers and employees
- Awareness amongst farmers of what training is available and how to access it
- Number of farmers who actually go beyond just talking about the value of training and actually undertake or provide it for themselves and their employees
- Confusing and sometimes conflicting relationships that exist between those that fund and those that provide training
- Individual farmer perceptions regarding the quality and relevance of training previously or recently accessed

### **What is meant by quality employees?**

There is plenty of evidence that the level of training is only one part of how farm employers currently value the quality of employees. It needs to be remembered that the level of formal training people look for also relates strongly to the role which is being filled.

Discussions with farmers provide a wide range of traits seen as meaning the quality of our employees. Examples of these are

- Honesty and Integrity
- Attitude and Motivation
- Practical skills
- Ability to think
- People skills (communication)
- Commitment and maturity
- Education and training
- Life skills



## How then do farmers value training?

### Lincoln University Study

A study completed by Lincoln University (3) looked at employment practices in place on dairy farms in Canterbury. Part of the study addressed the provision of training and the study broke training down into the two components of on and off farm training.

#### *On farm training*

Of the participants only one employer provided structured on farm training for their employees. Many commented that whilst they enjoyed providing training to employees that time was a major constraint. One employer only took on mature and trained employees. Comments made by these farmers included

- "I teach them everything they need to know-they can learn everything they need right here"
- "It is good to watch them grow"
- "It is a waste of time teaching them anything more than the basics-they'll only get poached"
- " I don't need staff to think, I need staff to do as I tell them"

#### *Off farm training*

Most participants saw the value in encouraging staff training but expressed concern about how employees valued the training and the ability to get work completed on farm with staff going off farm to train. There were consistent comments that showed an expectation that the training had to be effective for it to be valued by employers as worth remunerating employees for.

### United Kingdom Study

This highlights that the issues are not just a New Zealand issues but rather are common to many countries. These comments could just as easily have been made by New Zealand Farmers.

In a study completed in the British Isles (4) 80% of the 345 farmers surveyed identified specific areas of training that were required on farm but only 40% of those confirmed that this training would be carried out. When asked to indicate which barriers they identified with as limiting training, the response was as follows

- Cannot afford staff to have time off-57.9%
- Cost of training to the employer-47.4%
- Time of the day when the course is run- 43.5 %
- Unable to find the training needed-20.4%
- Cost of training to the employees-14.1%
- Never been able to prove the benefits-10.2%
- Poor quality of training-7.9%
- No one skilled in identifying training needs of staff-6.9%
- Trained staff take jobs in other businesses6.5%

### New Zealand Study

In a survey conducted by Craig Cooper in his 2000 Kellogg's project (5) the question was asked of employers about their capacity to train school leavers.

13% of respondents felt they had the capacity to do so whilst a further 55% said that, whilst they had the capacity, they would prefer them to be already trained. The balance of respondents felt they did not have the capacity.

The same survey also asked what level of skill they wanted in young employees and 70% of employers were satisfied with young staff having only basic practical skills.

### **Other Factors to Consider**

- Many new entrants who have recently left school have had enough of being trained and simply want to utilise their new found freedom
- Many employees are put off training by the expectation that they will have to pay for the course costs
- Very few employers now recognise the value of training within the remuneration package, rather it has become a requirement of entry into some roles
- In many cases training is offered but not taken up or valued by employees

## **What Training is available?**

### **Overview**

Training specific to agricultural related skills can be accessed from three distinct areas

- *Within our school system*  
Schools are able to access and provide training in farming related skills to their students using STAR and Gateway funding.

- *Tertiary education*  
Universities, polytechnics and a range of private training establishments offering many different pre employment training opportunities for future industry employees

A range of Dairy Industry organisations currently offer a range of scholarships that are available for students to pursue degree and diploma courses at tertiary education facilities.

- *Workplace learning*  
The Agricultural ITO currently facilitates on the job training as do a range of private and polytechnic training establishments (PTE's)

### **What is a pre employment course?**

This project looks at pre employment courses that new entrants to the industry undertake prior to entering a full time role on farm that involves study towards a recognised qualification such as the National Certificate in Agriculture, rather than a degree or diploma course.

Historically this type of training was provided by the likes of Flock House, Telford and Taratahi rural Polytechnics. However a number of factors appear to have encouraged more locally focused courses to develop in recent years.

- Government funding policies enabled competition to existing options to develop from other private training establishments and from within the high schools
- Students wanting to stay closer to home and in many cases continue living with parents/care givers and socialising with established networks of friends
- Students staying within the secondary system longer due to
  - Schools developing ways to retain students longer due to funding opportunities

- Communities encouraging the focus within schools of qualifications specific to their needs
- A shift in focus within the education system to enable provision of courses and subjects within schools that were more in line with students' needs or interests.
- Local farmers wanting to support training initiatives that improved the pool of employees available to them in their community
- Lack of awareness or in some cases confidence in existing facilities ability to meet these needs

Whilst this project is focusing on looking at recent initiatives with pre employment courses associated with high schools it must be recognised that these courses are likely to have a significant impact on the numbers of students that access the traditional pre employment courses available from the polytechnics.

For the purpose of this project we completed two case studies on courses that have evolved in the Waikato. These are

- The Hauraki Agricultural Academy course from Hauraki Plains College
- The Piarere Agricultural course from the Piarere Agricultural School

## **CASE STUDY: The Hauraki Agricultural Academy**

### **History and Development**

Hauraki Plains College has provided an Agricultural subject at the college for students for the last eight years. This has been taught in the classroom over a full year with four periods per week of theory. It was based on the Ag ITO's level 1 and 2 certificates. Seven students participated in the first year, growing to 39 in the seventh year of running.

As with most businesses, supply and demand was the main driver for change. As farms became more intensive, the demand for employees with greater skills increased and an opportunity was seen by people in the local community to



- Improve the high fallout percentages of children leaving school to farm, only to find it too frustrating and leaving the industry for good.
- Keep more local children employed locally.
- Helping the community prosper in general

Logan Taylor who was the Colleges Agricultural Tutor along with Ngairie Harris (Principle) and Keith Batter (Board of Trustees Chair and local farmer) were the three main people responsible for identifying the opportunity for changes at the College. Over 100 local people, businesses and community groups were contacted to gauge levels of support for this project.

A meeting was organised to discuss what was proposed with over 120 people attending. From this meeting a committee of six representatives was selected. The committee is responsible for putting into place guidelines associated with structure and strategy at the newly formed Hauraki Agricultural Academy.

Committee meetings were held fortnightly and resulted in a platform for the structure, strategy and resources that were necessary for the successful operations of this training academy. A detailed plan was put together that clarified the expectations and outcomes from the course. This provided the basis for the course development and operation.

## **Course Structure**

The course runs for six months from February to July. The students have two days in the classroom doing theory. They are then placed for three days on Dairy farms with farmer trainers. Students have weekends free. Logan Taylor is the course tutor and is employed by Hauraki College.

The course content is based on the National Certificate in Agriculture, Level two and includes an element of computing using a computer suite available for the academy. The farmer trainers have a large amount of input into the course content on the practical side. Not only on the farm but also as role models, as students gauge whether they wish to continue and make farming their career based on their experiences and what they see in people teaching them.

Student numbers need to be 17 students or greater to have full funding for the tutor but the course will still be operated with ten to fifteen students which is the number that has been found to be most effective for the course. As such this potentially requires the school to provide additional funding over and above Gateway in order to operate the course.

Students are sourced from within the College and also through advertising in the local papers to encourage other young people to enrol at Hauraki to then participate in the course.

## **Funding and Resources**

Funding is primarily provided via Gateway funding from the school with some top up from the normal budget although Logan has also traded a number of beef animal and sells surplus feed using leased land to help offset the course costs.

This land is located next to the College and is leased from a local landowner and has proven very useful in the training of the students, with the fences being removed each year to allow hay to be cut and then the block being re-fenced to enable the stock to be fattened.

The academy leases the old Mangataroto school building from the local Iwi which is 7 km from Hauraki Plains College and has a small piece of land associated with it that is ideal for some of the practical sessions. This is where the students are taught their theory component and some of the group practical, including their motorbike, chainsaw and tractor safety skills.

Logan has also been able to source sponsorship from local businesses to provide a van (recently purchased) which is used to pick up students and deliver them to their farms. The students all have overalls provided for them and farmers have been very generous with their time and donations.

The Academy now owns all of its own resources required to teach the course i.e. van, chainsaws, drills, incidentals. The standard of presentation is high with everyone on the course required to wear sponsored overalls (with sponsor's logos) at all times on farm and indeed anytime they are representing the college. These look really smart and professional.

## Course Delivery

Logan Taylor has been involved in farming before moving into the Agriculture teaching arena. Logan has had eight years experience in teaching and is very passionate about young people. This is an essential attribute required by all teaching staff if the academy is to be a success and indeed much of the success of this course can be attributed to the passion that Logan brings.

For Logan, Monday's and Tuesday's were teaching days. Wednesday's were spent organising the following week's tuition. Thursday's and Friday's were on farm visiting with students and farm trainers. Each week farm trainers were issued with a questionnaire to fill out with regard to progress made by their students. The farm trainers were able to discuss this with students before Logan receiving and adding to student records.

A van is used by Logan to ferry students from the college to the various farms and pick them up at the end of each day. It is nothing to clock up 300 km per day and it has been a good way to be in contact with students and farmer trainers on a regular basis. Logan is looking to phase this responsibility out by requiring students in the future to have a drivers licence because it has been a significant tie for him.

The students are continually being assessed by Logan and the farm trainers. If there are problems that need addressing, a committee member is delegated that responsibility. At the conclusion of the course a meeting is held with each student, his or her committee members and Logan. This is a brainstorming session as to what has transpired any recommendations, improvements etc. Similarly the farmer trainers meet to discuss new ideas, improvements for the course next year.

Students have also been involved in a number of other activities in the local community whilst on the course

- Planting for The Department of Conservation
- Painting a replica bridge in Ngatea
- Annual prize giving and function at the conclusion of the course
- Competing in interschool agricultural skill competitions



## Farmer Trainers

The farmer trainers are hand picked via a local network. Committee members try to select trainers that are motivated and good communicators. The farmer trainers are generally better than an average farmer and sites must be within a certain distance from the academy.

Students rotate around a variety of farmer trainers so they experience different styles and techniques. Logan tries very hard to “mix and match” students with trainers who will get the best results for each student. Just as Logan gets to know his students he also gets to know the farmer trainers.

As with the students, the farmer trainers must complete a police vetting report which is a requirement of the academy. The \$30 processing fee is paid by the academy.

A high standard is expected from all students. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the farm trainers have high standards themselves.

### **Outcomes and the Future**

The academy has been operating for two years and has had the following attendance and completion rates

Year 1: Eighteen students started, sixteen students completing the course with a 100% pass rate.

Year 2: Fifteen students starting, fourteen finishing, with thirteen students achieving the pass rate.

All students have been placed in full time employment at the conclusion of the course but there has not been an additional follow up with these students subsequently. However this is one of a number of areas that is currently being reviewed for the future.

The following issues are being considered

- follow up with students after placement in full time roles
- better interview techniques to maintain the quality of trainees
- improvements to the documentation to protect both school and students
- Other ways to encourage and support the trainee/ farmer trainers relationship

Logan is currently interviewing students for next years course with greater interest being demonstrated in the course and as such numbers are expected to at least equal previous years.

## **CASE STUDY: The Piarere Agricultural School**

### **History and Development**

The Window to Dairying in NZ event has been operating since 1997 and provided an opportunity for students and careers advisors from schools in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty to spend a day on a local dairy farm learning what opportunities the dairy industry offered young people. Its primary purpose was to improve the perceptions of these attending people towards a career in agriculture and encourage more young people to enter. Locally the need for this was seen due to the significant reduction in the numbers of young people choosing to work on dairy farms locally.

Local farmers involved in this event were aware of a significant decline in training opportunities available to potential entrants. Flock house had recently closed. The Waikato and BOP Polytechnics had reduced their involvement in agriculturally focused training, coupled with falling rolls at both Massey and Lincoln. Locally many young people were going straight from school and onto farms with little or no training and many were suffering for that.

The local High school, Matamata College, was running an agricultural subject for students with strong participation when an opportunity arose for a discussion between John Fegan of Land Based Training Waikato (private training provider), Graham Diver (principle) and Aaron Campbell



(agricultural tutor) of Matamata College. From this the idea of a pre employment course run locally was born and with further support from local farmers the idea evolved.

At the time there were no opportunities for funding for this type of initiative from within the Ministry of Education or the Dairy Sector. Therefore any initiative had to be funded by the schools or local communities and operated from within Matamata College's normal funding allocation.

Local farm owners Paul and Ainna Tidmarsh offered the lease of the old Piarere School which had been empty for many years and was located on their property south of Matamata and the local community businesses sponsored the upgrade of the facility to enable it to once again be used, this time as the Piarere Agricultural School.

The Piarere Agricultural Education Trust was formed in June 2000 with the following mission statement

"To facilitate quality training and education for current and future employees in New Zealand Agriculture"

This entity took on the responsibility for administering and maintaining the Piarere Agricultural facility which was now available for rent by any training providers who wished to provide agricultural training in the community. The trust had access to the Tidmarsh's farm, on which to conduct practical training and also to neighbouring farmers and farms. This was seen as an opportunity to centralise and coordinate the agricultural training available in the region.

Land Based Training were contracted by the Trust to deliver the pre-entry training course which was to be the flagship course for the facility.

Initially the delivery of this course was a joint venture between Land Based Training Waikato and Matamata College with the students coming from the college. However once Graham Diver left Matamata College the support within the school was undecided. The Agricultural tutor from Matamata College then made the decision to join Land Based Training and continue the course by offering participation to all school leavers. Funding was then able to be sourced directly from the Ministry of Education and the course has operated in this manner since that time.

## Course Structure

The Piarere Agricultural pre entry training course is available to **school leavers** (with some farming experience) in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty region. This is a six month course operated by Land Based Training (a registered private training provider) at the Piarere Agricultural School running from January to May each year.

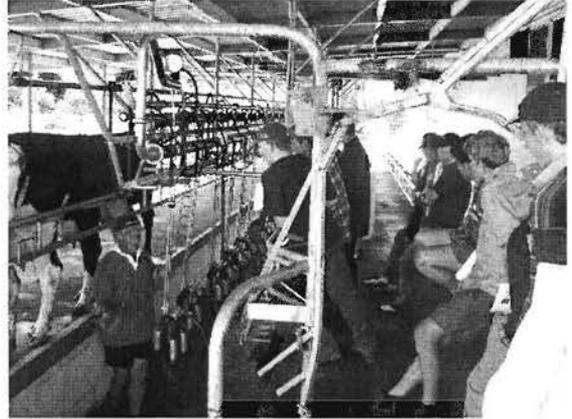
The course is based on two days per week in class and three days on farm, students having the weekends to themselves. Land Based Training uses local farmers to provide farms and work experience for trainees that is central to the courses structure. Land Based Training then provides three roles (Note: can be delivered by one person)

- Management
- Tutor(s)
- Field Officer

Students are studying to complete their level 2 Certificate in Agriculture, which is a qualification recognised by NZ Qualifications Authority, and also Land Based Training has included components of the level 3 Certificate of Agriculture to test students

The course has the following key elements

- (1) Fencing and water systems
- (2) Machinery (ATVs/Tractors/Two-Wheelers/Chainsaws)
- (3) Agrichemicals
- (4) Livestock ( calving/mating/handling/health/feeding)
- (5) Induction into work/ Health and Safety
- (6) Soils, fertiliser and pastures
- (7) Life skills
- (8) Milk Production
- (9) Basic literacy and numeracy



Potential participants are interviewed with their parent(s)/care giver(s) as part of acceptance to the course. This is to establish what they are prepared to commit to in undertaking the course and their levels of honesty, integrity and communication skills they have.

They are required to submit Curriculum Vitae with references that are then verified

- preference for a license and their own transport
- Students have completed year 12 high school
- Students have had some exposure to farming previously

Students have the choice to live in on farm or to live off farm and this obviously has an impact on which farmer sponsor they go to.

Once students have completed this training and have entered their first job, students then get involved with the next tier of training which is well established within the industry.

## **Funding and Resources**

The course is EFT's funded directly from the Ministry of Education with the students having an additional contribution towards the cost themselves.

Land Based Training provides all resources required to run the course off farm for both the practical and theoretical components of the course.

The Piarere School provides the venue as well as some basic resources that are available to all users of the facility, with one of the historical strengths of the location being access to the Tidmarsh's dairy farm for practical activities. However with a shift from a management to a share milking structure for the property this cooperation is very much reliant upon the provider's relationship with the individual sharemilkers.

## **Course Delivery**

There are three roles that Land Based Training provide for this course

### *Management*

This includes the administrative and development components, also writing of teaching material(s) and meeting all moderation requirements. All student records have to be passed through NZ Qualifications board.

#### *Tutor(s)*

The tutoring role includes theory work in the class room as well as practical work on farm. In the class students are working towards unit standards with a formal training plan and completing their workbooks and then the practical includes putting the theory into practice on farm i.e. driving a tractor or completing the maintenance checks.

As such it is vital the tutors have

- An ability to relate to students
- An understanding of the teaching framework for unit standards
- An ability to teach and assess the unit standards
- Practical farming knowledge and skills (credibility with the students)

When in class the day normally begins at 8:30am and concludes at 2:30pm allowing students who are milking to get back on farm. There is no requirement for student's to do further practical work over and above the allowed course time. This sees a normal working week of 32 hours for students in the course.

#### *Field Officer*

The Field Officer is responsible for finding the farmer trainers locally and then managing the relationship between the student and the farmer to ensure that the appropriate training is received on farm to enable the student to meet the practical component of the course.

The Field officer comes into class once a week to liaise with trainees and also is in contact with the Farmer trainers by phone every week. The field officer is on farm every four weeks for the practical training day. This day may be used to sign off a trainee's skill in a particular area or to check on how the farmer is assessing tasks and ensure there is consistency across trainers.



If there are any problems then it is the field officers role to organise for all parties to sit down and work through the issues and reach a conclusion.

#### *Earning versus learning*

This is one of the biggest issues for getting trainees into the course, but also retaining them. There is a desire by students to get out and begin earning rather than spending more time training. As such the course allows students to pick up casual work with their farmer sponsor or other farmers so long as Land Based Training are aware of the arrangements. This is to ensure it is fair and not placing undue pressure on the student. There is however, no payment to students for the time they spend working on farms during their coursework.

Students are encouraged to keep a diary of the hours they work on farm, and the type of work they do. This is discussed each week in class enabling tutors to be aware of what is happening on farm, type of tasks the student is completing. This enables the tutor to relate theory work to practical work on farm.

## Farmer Trainers

The role of the farmer trainer is crucial to the success of the course. Students spend three days per week on farm gaining valuable practical experience and putting into practices the theory they learn in class. As such farmers are interviewed and selected based upon

- Patience and understanding
- An interest and ability to pass on knowledge. (You can have great farmers who struggle when it comes to passing on their knowledge)
- Desire to see young people get ahead
- Willingness to put something back into the industry
- Willingness to complete the training records for the student and assess their competency

Farmer trainers are found by Land Based Training usually by referral from other farm trainers. Land Based Training meets with the farmer trainers to clarify the role and responsibilities.

The Field Officer allocates students to farmer trainers and the farmer gets to meet trainee(s) before beginning each period of work. An agreement is then entered into between the Farmer, Trainee and Land Based Training clarifying everyone's expectations and responsibilities.

Outside of that the field officer meets with the farmer and the trainee on farm every two to four weeks to assist as required.

Students spend ten week blocks with each trainer. Students are then rotated to provide a wide range of experience which includes different types and sizes of farms, this process assist students in deciding what type of operation they would prefer to work in for the future. This rotation also teaches students how to deal with different types of people and improves student's communication and relationship management skills.

Particularly noticeable when students learn first hand the difference between working one on one with the boss on one job and then working with three other employees in another placement.



## Outcomes and the Future

Numbers attending course each year have fluctuated between 8 and 14 students each year all of whom have gone into full time employment at the conclusion of the course. Students frequently comment on the value the variation in on farm training they received, had in helping them make a decision as to which job offer to take.

An end of year prize giving is an opportunity to thank everyone involved in the program as well as make the students feel proud of their achievements and as such it is treated as a formal occasion

The Piarere Trust is currently reviewing the future of the course given the challenges now faced from competition from Gateway funded courses now being run in schools.

## Conclusions

Access to appropriate training is important for the growth and development of both current and future employees in the agricultural industry and also the ability of agricultural enterprises to operate efficiently in the future.

Quite appropriately from the industries perspective there is a concern about who is providing training and the standard of its delivery. However from an individuals perspective, who is conducting the training is likely less important so long as the training received is useful in their employment.

As such the conclusions we draw are based upon the assumption that the quality and delivery of the training must be of the appropriate standard. In both case studies the students were being trained for a recognised qualification by registered providers meeting the moderation requirements of the Qualifications authority.

Pre employment training provides an excellent opportunity for people entering the workforce to develop skills which clearly meets the needs of employers who perceive releasing staff for training once employed to be a limitation.

However the nature of pre employment training would appear to be changing quite dramatically with the evolution of gateway funded courses within schools. The schools are now competing directly with the traditional providers of pre entry training such as Telford and Taratahi, and more recently Piarere, as students who normally would have left school to attend these courses are now being encouraged to stay.

The nature of funding encourages schools to retain students on their role longer and training providers are becoming far more flexible in the manner which they deliver training. As such the growth of these courses is already being encouraged in many areas by training providers who are able to transfer their training away from traditional fixed facility training farms into lower overhead and more locally targeted courses using local community resources.

The likelihood is that this will continue as long as the course quality is maintained and therefore the Dairy Industry should be looking at what type and level of support for these courses is appropriate given their ability to add value to the dairy industry.

However any moves to support pre employment activities in schools needs to consider the potential adverse effects they may have on existing courses offered by many polytechnics and private training providers.

## **Risks and Opportunities of Pre employment training**

The benefits that pre employment training in general provides

- A larger pool of employees with basic training available to farmers that don't have the time to provide training from within their businesses.
- Complementary training to existing tertiary and earn as you learn options.

The deliver of pre-employment training from within the high schools also provides

### *Opportunities*

- an opportunity to see employees prepared before they enter the workforce using the schools funding stream i.e. Gateway and STAR, rather than the industries
- Opportunities for greater promotion of agriculture within the schools. Indeed not taking this opportunity may be allowing other industries to continue to attract more people in the future
- Opportunity for the Agricultural industry to form better and more effective contact with schools through supporting these initiatives
- There would appear to be an opportunity for schools that are running gateway funded agricultural courses to support other schools that do not. This would potentially enable other schools students to participate in the courses if the communication and commitment to the needs of the students existed.

### *Risks*

- A risk of a splintering of training and potential risks to the quality of training provided
- A strong challenge to the traditional providers of pre entry training due to fewer students to tap into.
- Students potentially leave schools with a variety of different units and credits making it difficult to structure future training if the development of these courses is not coordinated.

## **Recommendations for the Structure and Delivery of Pre employment Training courses**

### **Course Level Recommendations**

- (1) There needs to be a board that provides a clear structure direction and plan for the course that matches the needs of the farmers and students.
- (2) The course structure and training needs to be reviewed on an ongoing basis by everyone involved in the course to keep it relevant
- (3) Ongoing community support and involvement in the venture is absolutely vital. This appears to go hand in hand with a clear relationship between the course and a local school.
- (4) There must be a simple and efficient means of monitoring student performance on farms and its match to the learning in class.
- (5) There must be robust process for identifying conflicts between farmers and trainees and dealing with them in a timely and effective manner.

- (6) Must be recognition of the students achievements in a manner that gives them pride in the course and encourages competition and excellence in their learning to prepare them for the real world
- (7) The course must focus on preparing and developing students interpersonal and communication skills
- (8) The course should prepare students for selecting the first job and support them in this
- (9) Ideally the course should provide links to mentoring for these students once they enter the workplace to assist them in their career development
- (10) Those involved in the delivery of the course must be passionate and driven to make the course succeed
- (11) A facility must be available that provides not only a class room but a small amount of land upon which basic vehicle and skill training can be conducted.
- (12) The quality of the farmer trainers and their facilities, where used, must be high as they are critical to this type of course.
- (13) The farmer trainers, where used, must be managed and supported effectively.
- (14) The students need the opportunity to see a wide variety of farming practices and employer personalities to best prepare them for their career.
- (15) Their needs to be sufficient numbers of students for funding but few enough to ensure adequate contact and support for them on farm and in the practical sessions.
- (16) Whilst these courses function with the level of funding provided their remains a need for strong community support and sponsorship for their ongoing viability

## **Industry Level Recommendations**

The Dairy Industry should look at

- (1) Ensuring the ongoing promotion of the industry image in a manner that increases the quantity and quality of people considering a career in agriculture and to support these venture in attracting trainees
- (2) Ensure schools receive a coordinated and consistent message about career opportunities that the industry provides
- (3) Consider means by which it could support the development of these types of initiatives in a manner that creates the best outcomes for student school and industry.
- (4) Continue to work with farmers to ensure employment practices support the image that industry needs to promote to attract future employees

# Appendix One

## What are Training Providers

There are a range of schools universities, polytechnics and private companies and individuals who deliver training. When it comes to someone providing the training for you or your staff it is likely this person, or the organisation they represent, is a private training provider or polytechnic.

In order to be able to deliver training towards recognised qualifications a training provider must be registered with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. This then enables their activities to be monitored in terms of the quality of training they provide through the moderation process.

Each qualification is made up of a number of individual unit standards put together to complement each other.

For example riding ATV on flat terrain is one unit standard that has its own set of learning that must be demonstrated in order to complete the unit. However a qualification focusing on ATV operation will include a number of different individual units that reflects riding on hilly and flat terrain, towing a trailer etc.

These individual units are put together to test your competency in a realistic range of areas that you are likely to encounter within your workplace.

However this does not mean that all courses taught are unit standard based, or necessarily that a course that is not based on unit standards is no good.

Each training provider develops their own way of delivering the individual unit standards and from that the qualifications, and in theory that should be the only difference between training providers at each end of the country teaching the same unit standard or qualification.

## How training is delivered to farmers

Most training provided is done so on a subsidised basis, with a proportion of the costs being met by one of a variety of different funds the government or industry provides. The AGITO administers the most common source of funds to the agriculture sector and as such has a range of different courses that they contract training providers to teach at the subsidised rate and they also facilitate on the job training between the employer and the employee.

The Agriculture ITO is then able to monitor and moderate the training and as such is an ideal first contact point for people wanting to find training in their community.

However the Polytechnics and Universities and other private training providers also have funds to subsidise their own training and as such competition exists between all of these groups for trainees and funds.

Whilst this can create confusion the reality is that the training provided in most cases originates off the same framework and as such if the training provider is accredited and the moderation system working effectively then the quality of training should be similar. In reality the AGITO provides nearly 100% of the "learn as you earn" training in New Zealand.

At the end of the day it still comes down to the ability of the tutor as to the final product you receive on farm or in the class room or where ever it is you receive the training.

## How agricultural training is delivered in schools

Some schools elect to deliver the training themselves using the STAR or Gateway funds to develop or support agricultural tutors within the schools whilst others elect to bring in external private training provider or a combination of both. Regardless of who is doing the training they must be registered as an assessor to the appropriate level for what they are delivering.

As such there is strong competition from a variety of training providers to get access to these schools as this becomes an important mechanism to them in sourcing future trainees and they have the ability in many cases to deliver the training easier than schools.

*Example:*

*Nicki Inwood is based out of Land Based Trainings Cambridge office and is responsible for coordinating and developing agricultural programmes within the schools that she works with in the Waikato.*

*They currently deliver a range of different types of agriculturally focused courses*

- *Elective agricultural course within the normal school curriculum*
- *Agriculture offered as a full subject normally in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> Form*
- *Full time Gateway Agricultural courses within school ( Level 2)*
- *6 Month Pre entry course for school leavers( Piarere pre entry course Level 2-3)*
- *NZ Qualifications short courses for agricultural employees and farmers in general*
- *NZ Qualifications full time courses for agricultural employees and farmers in general- (full time being 1 day per fortnight over a season)*

Training providers going into schools are able to develop a variety of agricultural focused courses specific to schools needs, from delivery of a one off taster course to an elective subject within the course curriculum, similar to Maths or English, under STAR funding through to the provision of a full time Agriculture course for students using Gateway.

These same training providers are also delivering training to farmers partially funded by the Agriculture ITO or in some cases using funds sourced directly from the Ministry of Education.

## Appendix Two

### NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA)

This body is charged with overseeing the development and maintenance of the standards that all educators must adhere to. This includes

- providing an overarching quality assurance role in the tertiary sector
- developing and quality assuring relevant and important national qualifications ( ITO's normally carry this out on behalf of the NZQA)
- administer the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- register private training establishments and quality assure the training they provide
- provide dedicated support to wananga and Maori private training
- Administer the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and other school, trade and vocational assessment.
- Establish the register of Quality assured qualifications

### National Qualifications Framework

This framework describes the levels of performance that learners need to attain to gain credits towards national qualifications. They do not in general describe the content or curriculum as this is developed by the relevant Industry training organisations in consultation with the industry. The individual teaching resources for the theory units are then developed by the individual training providers to deliver on the outcomes required.

The Framework is a three-pronged quality system:

- national standards are registered
- these are used by accredited organisations
- A moderation system ensures national consistency.

There are more than 18,000 registered unit standards and 800 National Certificates and National Diplomas covering almost every area of work and learning.

### National standards

Each standard registered on the Framework describes what a learner needs to know or what they must be able to achieve. There are two types of standards

- Unit standards developed by experts in their fields
- Achievement standards currently used only in school curriculum subjects for the National Certificate of Education Achievement

Standards are developed under a process of consensus where they are first drafted by expert groups (engineers for engineering standards, geographers for geography standards and so on). The draft standards are then circulated to stakeholders for comment and contribution. Once standards are agreed to and registered, they are subject to review by stakeholders and experts on a regular basis. This allows for standards to be refined and updated over time.

Industry Training Organisations (ITO's) develop standards and national qualifications for specific industries and professions - they are responsible for about half the standards on the Framework.

### **Standards Level**

There are ten levels involved in a qualification - 1 is the least complex and 10 the most. Levels depend on the complexity of learning. They do not equate to 'years spent learning' but reflect the content of the qualification.

Levels 1-3 are of approximately the same standard as senior secondary education and basic trades training. Levels 4-6 approximate to advanced trades, technical and business qualifications. Levels 7 and above equate with advanced qualifications of graduate and postgraduate standard.

### **Accredited Industry Training Organisations**

Industry Training Organisations (ITO's) are recognised by the Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary Education) under the Industry Training Act 1992. They are established by particular industries and are responsible for:

- setting national skill standards for their industry
- providing information and advice to trainees and their employers
- arranging for the delivery of on and off-job training (including developing training packages for employers)
- arranging for the assessment of trainees and
- arranging the monitoring of quality training

### **National Qualifications Framework Moderation**

The purpose of moderation of assessment is to ensure that:

- assessments are consistent with the national standard
- assessments are fair and valid
- assessors are making consistent judgements about student performance

There are two levels of moderation monitoring a registered provider

- Internal moderation is the responsibility of individual providers and ensures consistency of assessment among assessors on single sites and across multi-site providers.
- External moderation provided by the ITO to ensure that standards based assessment is consistent nationally across all providers.

## **Appendix Three**

### **Funding Sources**

Many of our key industry organisations and indeed many private training establishments already have established relationships with many funds and as such farmers are receiving training that is funded from a variety of different sources.

Most significantly in this case is the Agricultural ITO which receives funding from Dairy InSight and then leverages off this to receive additional funding from the government which is then used to provide subsidised training to farmer employers and employees.

Specific to schools it is felt worthwhile to mention the following funding sources

#### **STAR Funding**

This funding has been available in schools since 1996 and in practice it enables students to experience learning in different settings and trial their career aspirations as well as providing a wider range of opportunities for students to achieve success within schools. It is a fund that both assists schools in retaining students in school through making learning more enjoyable and also assists in getting students into the workplace through providing for contact with career options.

The way the funding is used by schools varies according to their interpretation of the purpose of the fund but from the agricultural industries perspective, and indeed every other industry, it means schools have a source of funds to give students access to skills and knowledge that is relevant to agriculture. In some cases there is overlap between the STAR and Gateway funding streams.

Schools may use this funding source to provide block courses for students or simply a single period of activity within the course of the normal school day. Many students see STAR courses as providing them an opportunity to try as many different career options, workplaces and tertiary study environments as possible.

Commonly taught courses accessed under STAR include ATV and Fencing, Tractor safety and others all of which are valuable skills for new entrants to have particularly now that the issue of Health and Safety on farm becomes more focused.

This also needs to be recognised as a point where the image of agriculture is very much open for students to interpret. 84% of schools providing STAR courses indicate that 60% or more of students have accessed these courses.<sup>(6)</sup>

However it is of interest to note that when schools were surveyed as to why they turned students away from STAR courses that the second most common reason was they were senior students looking to cruise in their senior year, which suggests that the courses are seen as the easy option.

#### **Gateway Funding**

The Gateway program provides additional funds to eligible schools to enable senior students (years 11-13) to pursue training within a workplace in their local community. This is intended to prepare those students to undertaking a career in that profession rather than to provide work experience.<sup>(8)</sup> This program was first

piloted in 2001 with 24 schools participating. Funding is only available to schools with a decile rating of 1-5, but is likely to be available to all of these schools in the future.

This funding is currently available to 63 schools who decide at their discretion what opportunities to provide using this funding stream. Training relating to the hospitality, automotive, retail, tourism, engineering and building industries are currently the most popular in schools with Agriculture coming seventh in the list.

The funding can be used to deliver courses either directly by the school using skills and resources they currently have or can develop or by using external training providers.

This funding stream is being successfully utilised by a number of schools to facilitate agricultural training within the schools.

## **Glossary of Terms**

*Earn as you Learn*- This is a reference to any courses that an individual who is employed on a farm undertakes as part of their personal training and development

*Gateway*- This refers to a funding option available within schools to provide training in non traditional subject areas in preparation for a specific career

*Pre employment training course*- This refers to courses that new entrants to the industry undertake prior to entering a full time role on farm.

*Training Establishment*- The term used to describe an entity or organisation that provides the training. It is a term that is inclusive of universities polytechnics and private individuals and companies.

*Private Training Provider* – A variation on private training establishment not owned by the government.

*STAR*- This is a funding option available within schools to provide training in non traditional subject areas as a taster for a variety of career options

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## Acknowledgements

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Brian Nicholson- Agriculture ITO



### **Is there a need for training?**

- "Shortage of suitably qualified and motivated staff"
- "Skill shortage both specific to industry and life skills"

### **What influences farmers using formal training?**

- How training is valued by employers and employees
- Awareness of what training is available and how to access it
- Perceptions regarding the quality and relevance of training accessed

### **What is meant by quality employees?**

- Honesty and Integrity
- Attitude and Motivation
- Practical skills
- Ability to think
- People skills (communication)
- Commitment and maturity
- Education and training
- Life skills

### How then do farmers value training?

- "I teach them everything they need to know-they can learn everything they need right here"
- "It is good to watch them grow"

### How then do farmers value training?

- "It is a waste of time teaching them anything more than the basics-they'll only get poached"
- " I don't need staff to think, I need staff to do as I tell them"

### United Kingdom Study Barriers to Training

- Cannot afford staff to have time off-57.9%
- Cost of training to the employer-47.4%
- Time of the day when the course is run- 43.5 %
- Unable to find the training needed-20.4%

### United Kingdom Study Barriers to Training

- Cost of training to the employees-14.1%
- Never been able to prove the benefits-10.2%
- Poor quality of training-7.9%
- Trained staff take jobs in other businesses6.5%

### Employers capacity to train school leavers.

13% of respondents felt they had the capacity to do so

55% said that, whilst they had the capacity, they would prefer them to be already trained.

Balance of respondents felt they did not have the capacity.

### Other Factors to Consider

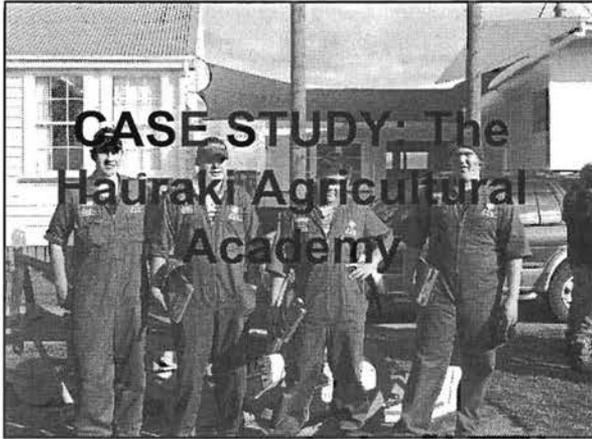
- People who have left school have had enough of training and want to utilise their freedom
- Many employees put off training by the course costs
- Very few employers now recognise the value of training within the remuneration package
- In many cases training is offered but not taken up or valued by employees

### What Training is available?

- *Within our school system*
- *Tertiary education*
- *Workplace learning*

### What is a pre employment course?

- Prior to entering a full time role on farm.
- A qualification such as the National Certificate in Agriculture, rather than a degree or diploma course.



### **Why start this up**

- Children leaving school to farm, only to find it too frustrating and leaving the industry for good.
- Keep more local children employed locally.
- Helping the community prosper in general

### **Course Structure**

- Six months from February to July
- Two days in class and three days on farm
- Students have weekends free
- Tutor employed by Hauraki College.
- Based on the National Certificate in Agriculture Level two

### **Farmer Trainers**

- Hand picked via a local network.
- Motivated and good communicators
- Generally better than an average farmer
- Students rotate around farmer trainers
- Utmost importance that the farm trainers have high standards themselves.

### **Course Delivery**

- Logan Taylor has had eight years experience
- Monday's and Tuesday's were teaching days.
- Wednesday's organising the following week's tuition.
- Thursday's and Friday's on farm visiting students and farm trainers.

### **Course Delivery**

- Each week farm trainers issued a questionnaire
- Problems are addressed by a committee member
- Van used to ferry students to farms
- Involvement in the local community whilst on the course

### **Funding and Resources**

- Gateway funding from the school
- Trade beef and sells surplus feed
- Leases the old Mangataroto school building
- Sponsorship from local businesses to provide a van (recently purchased) overalls etc

### **Outcomes**

- Year 1: sixteen students completing the course
- Year 2: thirteen students achieving the pass rate.
- All students have been placed in full time employment

## Future

- Follow up with students after placement in full time roles
- Better interview techniques
- Improvements to the documentation
- Other ways to encourage and support the trainee/ farmer trainers relationship



## Why start this up

- Window to Dairying since 1997
- Local farmers aware of decline in training opportunities
- Young people going straight from school onto farms with little or no training
- Matamata College running an agricultural subject
- Local farm owners provided old Piarere School
- The local community sponsored upgrade

## Course Content

- Fencing and water systems
- Machinery (ATVs/Tractors/Two-Wheelers/Chainsaws)
- Agrichemicals
- Livestock ( calving/mating/handling/health/feeding)
- Induction into work/ Health and Safety
- Soils, fertiliser and pastures
- Life skills
- Milk Production
- Basic literacy and numeracy

## What was different

- The first of the new breed
- No specific funding available
- Course moved away from college and community

## Gateway Funding

- First piloted in 2001 with 24 schools participating
- Senior students (years 11-13) to pursue training within a workplace
- Not work experience
- Prepare students to undertaking a career in that profession
- Currently only available to schools with a decile rating of 1-5

## Gateway Funding

- Likely to be available to all decile 1-7 schools in the future.
- Hospitality, automotive, retail, tourism, engineering and building industries are most popular
- Agriculture coming seventh in the list.
- Either delivered directly by the school or by using external training providers.

## Benefits Pre employment

- Employees with basic training available to farmers that don't have the time to train
- Complementary training to existing tertiary and earn as you learn options.

### *Opportunities*

- Employees prepared before they enter the workforce.
- Using the schools funding stream to train students
- To promote positive attitudes towards AG in schools by supporting these initiatives
- To improve communication between schools

### *Risks*

- Splintering of training and risks to quality
- Strong challenge to the traditional providers
- Students leave schools with a variety of different units

### **Course Level Recommendations**

- Board that provides clear structure direction and plan
- Ongoing community support and involvement
- Course structure and training reviewed
- Passionate and driven from tutors
- Class room and small amount of land

### **Course Level Recommendations**

- Quality farmer trainers managed and supported effectively.
- Expose students to wide variety of farming practices and employer personalities
- Simple and efficient monitoring student performance on farms
- Process for identifying and managing conflicts

### **Course Level Recommendations**

- Focus on developing interpersonal and communication skills
- Mentoring for students in the workplace
- Recognition of the students achievements
- Sufficient students for funding but few enough for contact

### **Industry Level Recommendations**

- Ensure better promotion of the industry image
- Coordinated and consistent message about career opportunities that the industry provides
- Support the development of these types of initiatives
- Work with farmers to ensure employment practices support the image