

# Branding a Dairy Farming Operation

**Campbell Clayton-Greene**

November 2004



People. Performance. Progress.

## Summary

**Every company has a reputation. Everyone you meet will form an opinion about your company, even if they have not done business with you yet. The challenge is to manage your reputation so that the opinion that people have of you is positive. This is what creates a brand.**

Branding will not have merit if it is a stand-alone strategy. It needs to be adopted as part of best practice for all aspects of the business.

The farmers that have undertaken a branding initiative have done so primarily to attract quality staff - they have also found it has helped establish strong relationships with other stakeholders, and a strong sense of pride within the company. Those farmers currently branding their operations reported

- 1. An increase in staff pride, in being part of a professional, successful organisation.**
- 2. An increase in productivity and the quality of work.**
- 3. Enhanced relationships with suppliers.**
- 4. With values and visions formally stated in the brand, all those associated with the business have a reputation to live up to.**

The greatest advantage may well be gained in the future, as farmers take responsibility for their part in the New Zealand Dairy industry.

Whether a full branding initiative, or using the more low key networking approach, to enhance the prospect of growth in defined areas of your farming operation, management of 'your' brand is likely to become increasingly important.



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# 1. Introduction

**There are many factors influencing the productivity and profitability of a dairy farming operation. Whether a 50/50 sharemilker, owner/operator, or landowner employing staff, all are seeking ways to increase the bottom line, and/or grow and expand the business. When the tangible side of the operation is at it's full potential, what can be done to add value to your business, and increase opportunities for growth? This report is designed to explore the opportunities for branding a dairy farming operation.**

As first time employers in our 50/50 sharemilking job, we found getting the right staff for the job very difficult. With 2 staff having left in our first year, we had a less than impressive record to attract future staff! This lead us to consider what we could do to stand out as an employer of choice. We saw the need to implement systems and procedures, and therefore be perceived to be a professional operation – which would in turn be the beginning of a 'brand'. We realised that once a brand was established we could capitalise on it when looking to expand our business, whether it be to further sharemilking opportunities, or land ownership.

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*"Branding will not have merit if it is a stand-alone strategy. It needs to be adopted as part of best practice for all aspects of the business including business planning, monitoring, people management, systemising and use of technologies consistent with the performance level expected of the business."*

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When talking with other farmers that have undergone a formal branding initiative, their primary reason for doing so was to be seen as a first choice employer, but they also saw branding as a way to separate themselves from others in areas where competition exists.

Dairying has the luxury of a ready-made marketing vehicle in its co-operative dairy structures, but being relieved of the responsibility for sales and debt management however, does not relieve the business of needing to present its brand to other markets.

Every person, business and organisation has a reputation. Everyone who comes in contact with you will form an opinion of you. This report looks at managing your reputation so that the opinion that people have of you is positive.

Branding is about defining the values and vision you have for your business and communicating this to the wider market. In farming it is about underpinning relationships with key suppliers, and stakeholders to maximise business opportunities.

Farm operators will need to attract new opportunities by communicating what they can offer to the wider dairying community. This perception of the business will be fundamental in attracting the best quality investment and expansion opportunities.

As businesses look to grow and expand, there may be a need to look beyond traditional on-farm productivity that is gained by re-engineering the tangible side of the operation. This report will discuss the area of 'branding' as a way of adding value.

<sup>3</sup>There are several key areas in which branding your dairy farming operation could provide benefits. This report will discuss strategies that can be implemented to achieve the potential benefits.

- Attracting opportunity for growth
- Staff attraction and involvement of people in the business
- Achieving preferred supplier status with key resources such as fertiliser, pasture inputs, supplements, and contractors.
- Establishing the best relationship with financiers

Focusing on the above would have the additional benefit of enhancing the perception of the dairy industry as a whole, through positive community attitudes towards farming practices (best practices), and a heightened perception of our dairy industry by overseas customers.

This report will first look at branding in general terms, and then examine how this can be related to a dairy operation.

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<sup>2</sup> ***“As land values have risen, the traditional path of achieving farm ownership through 50/50 sharemilking has become increasingly difficult. Sharemilkers are finding the step to farm ownership just too large. On top of this there is an increasing need to utilise their large herd management skills, rather than downsizing and returning to a smaller, less delegated role. As farm owners age, and the level of capital required to own land increases there is likely to be increased separation between the operational side of the business, and the property owners.”***

**Kerry Ryan**

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## 2. Branding

**Every company has a reputation. Everyone you meet will form an opinion about your company, even if they have not done business with you yet. The challenge is to manage your reputation so that the opinion that people have of you is positive. This is what creates a brand. To enhance the probability of success, we need to ensure the strategic branding process is a thorough one.**

Branding involves much more than simply designing a new logo or packaging. Rather, a successful branding program entails an in-depth analysis of a company's history, culture, strengths, competitive factors and market opportunities. This detailed analysis is therefore essential in developing a strong connection between the realities and the perception of a brand.

<sup>4</sup>A strategic branding initiative entails the following key components:

- A clear company vision and associated areas of opportunity
- Identification of the target group
- A unique, focused promise to exploit areas of opportunity
- Awareness, perception and relationship-building goals
- Integrated branding communications vehicles that support the promise through graphics, advertising, PR, Web site, newsletters, strategic alliances, etc
- Tools to track performance results vs. goals

A brand is a promise of the value stakeholder (employees, customers, suppliers, financiers, investors, prospects) of your business will receive. To

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<sup>1</sup>"For small businesses, branding is not about slick advertisements. Small-business branding is about getting your target market to see you as the preferred choice. Building a slightly famous brand is not just about what you do; it's about what you do differently from everyone else."

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become a brand, you've got to become relentlessly focussed on what you do that adds value. Branding integrates all parts of a company to present a unified message about the company – this is what is referred to as integrated marketing.

## Reputation is vital

<sup>1</sup>One of the keys to business success is to establish a good reputation - and a brand can help you do that. Your reputation works as your strongest marketer by communicating the relationship you have with people who've done business with you, and your target audience in general.

If you establish a position of trust and relevance in potential stakeholders minds, you're already in the door. The more people believe in your brand, the more it will spread throughout your niche market without your pushing. If your brand is clear, distinctive, easily understood, and expresses a unique, compelling benefit that people believe in, it will allow you to reap the benefits within that competitive area.

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*"To become a brand, you've got to become relentlessly focussed on what you do that adds value."*

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Businesses need to remember that brands exist in stakeholder's head and hearts, not on the side of vehicles, those are simply brand names and logos. In other words although a company may own a brand or logo, it's stakeholders also 'own' the brand. And these brands that live in stakeholder's heads are formed and reformed with every contact based on a bundle of brand messages.

Inherent in the integrated marketing concept is the recognition that every part of an organisation has a communication dimension. Everything a company does (or doesn't do) sends a message. Consistency of the message is vital to cementing brand trust.

## The sources of brand messages

Because controlling or influencing brand messages is the basis for managing brand relationships, it is critical to identify where these messages originate. An analysis of brand contact points shows major sources of brand messages.

- Planned messages
- Products/Services/Relationships
- Unplanned

## **Planned** – What the company says

These are traditional marketing communication messages, which include advertising, sales promotion, packaging, sponsorships.

Planned messages make a promise about what the brand and company can or will do and are generally responsible for creating brand awareness, brand positioning, brand knowledge and motivating some type of behavioural response.

## **Product, Services, Relationships** – What the company does

The direct interaction with the company itself; products, services or relationships.

## **Unplanned** – Confirmation of what the company says and does

These influential messages are communicated by comments made by anyone who comes into contact with your business.

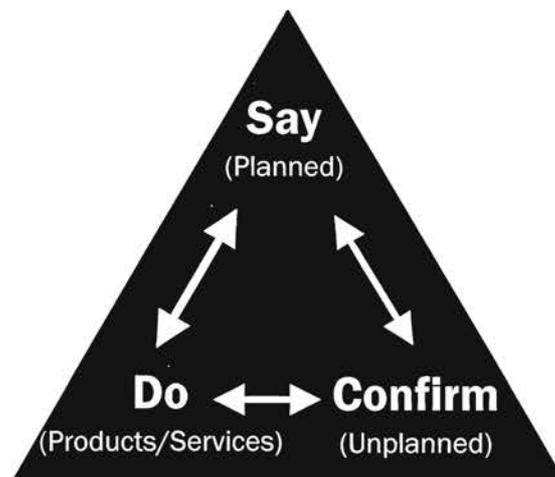
Unplanned messages can have significant impact because the sources are seen either as experts on the company (such as employees) or objective protectors of the public interest. The more the unplanned messages confirm that a company does what it says it will do, the greater the trust that is built with all stakeholders.

Unplanned messages create the most difficult consistency problems because they are not under the control of the organisation.

## **The Integration Triangle**

The “Integration Triangle”<sup>1</sup> (right) is a simple way of illustrating how perceptions are created from the various brand message sources.

The simple model can identify inconsistencies in a brand’s communication, and can alert a company to potential relationship problems – when it doesn’t do what it promises to do and/or others say the brand hasn’t done what it promised. In other words, the ‘say’ messages delivered by the company must be consistent with the ‘do’ messages or how product and services perform as well as be consistent with what others ‘confirm’ about the brand. Confirmation, or lack of it, should be used in managing both ‘say’ and ‘do’ messages.



## Where does 'branding' fit into the Dairy Farm operation?

In an environment of increasing competition for land, employment and employees, it is important to stand out from the crowd, in order to attract opportunities and grow.

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"Branding is about taking a 'tall poppy' stance, and having confidence in the integrity of your business "

**Greg Glover**

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<sup>4</sup>A branded message can be used to communicate uniqueness and create a competitive advantage over others. In a dairy farming operation we need to first identify in what areas competition exists, then identify the point of difference in our organisation. The focus is not only on communicating what you do well, but what you do differently from other businesses. We need to define the values and vision we have for our business to be able to communicate what makes it unique.

We can use this message about our values and vision, or the way we do things, to create a point of difference when communicating with:

- Potential employees
- Potential stakeholders/employers
- Preferred suppliers
- Financial institutions
- Fonterra and their customers

In the following sections we will examine each of these in more detail.

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"Moving from an informal process of branding (trying to make a good name for yourself) to a formal process, in which you are out there, stating your integrity, gives your business a set focus, and a target to achieve. The motivation to achieve them is far greater when you advertise what you do well"

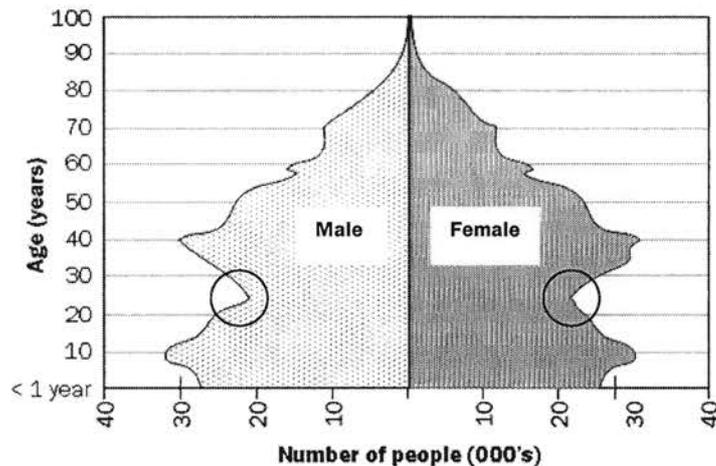
**Greg Glover**  
Drumlea Farms

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### 3. Staff Attraction

#### **The target group – Potential employees**

With the unemployment rate hovering around 4%, almost all industries are facing the same problem – a shortage of suitable candidates



Source: New Zealand Dairy Exporter – November 2004

The graph above shows the age profile of the total New Zealand population. Clearly there are a significantly lower number of 18-25 year olds entering the workforce, than there has been for some time.

Although there is certainly competition *within* the industry for staff, the demand for labour is high within *all* areas of the New Zealand labour market. For operations to attract high quality applicants from other areas there needs to be a continuous effort to promote a professional business and competitive career option for individuals in other industries.

#### **Where does branding fit in?**

It is evident that, as an employer, branding your business to stand out from the crowd is becoming increasingly important. An operation that has managed their reputation and branded to create awareness and value to those in the labour market, is a positive move towards being a first choice employment opportunity.

*“We are in the same market as other high profile employers, such as Jim van der Poel, and we wanted to create a point of difference, to increase our profile and be considered a first choice employer by potential staff ...”*

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**Greg Glover of Drumlea Farms, a 950 cow operation based near Hamilton, had been informally branding his farming business. In 1999 they decided to undertake a more structured branding initiative, launching 'Drumlea Farms'. Since then he has not advertised any position for 3-4 years, and has noticed a definite increase in staff pride, and productivity. Greg has won two Dairy Excellence Awards, in the Human Resources section, and is a member of Quality Farm Employers of New Zealand (QFENZ).**

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*"Creating a brand and advertising this creates a 'tall poppy' stance. This, if not managed well, can work against you, but having communicated a statement about your organisation it ensures that you live up to it. It focuses you on achieving the correct outcome..."*

*"...It also communicates to the employee what is expected from them. It creates a feeling of pride, with a name and logo prominent in all areas of the operation eg overalls, farm maps, correspondence – this all helps reinforce the concept that they are involved in a professional organization that stands for something."*

**Greg Glover, Drumlea Farms**

## **What is the value?**

*Greater number of quality candidates.*

*If your reputation can be managed and communicated so potential employees are contacting you regarding possible positions before they are available, the chance of securing a high quality employee, more suitable for the job, is enhanced.*

*Ability to sell complete package.*

*Operations that have the ability to attract the best staff will do so through more than just higher wages. They will be able to negotiate remuneration packages with more emphasis on the work environment, learning environment and value of the job to the employee's future career prospects.*

*Employee pride.*

*When employees know they are involved in a top operation they are proud to be part of it.*

*Lower staff turnover.*

*The associated cost of staff recruitment would be reduced as a result of the above.*

## 4. Attracting opportunities

### The target group – Land owners and business partners

<sup>2</sup> In the last 2-3 years we have seen land values rise to a level where the traditional path to farm ownership through 50/50 sharemilking has become increasingly difficult (Fig. 1).

The cost/price squeeze has fuelled the drive for efficiencies to protect profit margins. This has increased farm size (Fig. 3) and consequent demands for capital funding. As businesses get bigger, the ability of individuals to finance them is more difficult.

This recognition of the importance of economies of scale has had an impact on farmers moving from purely operational to land ownership.

Managers/sharemilkers increasingly want to utilise their large herd/farm management skills rather than downsizing and returning to a smaller, less delegated role, on a farm they can 'afford'.

With sharemilking opportunities on the decline (see Fig. 3) is there a need for a different approach to growth within the dairy industry?

Trend in dairy land values (price per ha)

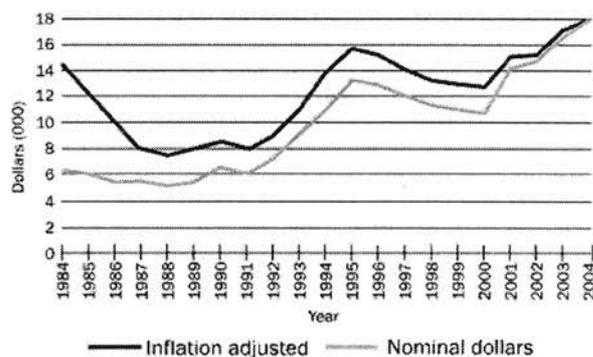


Figure 1: Dairy Statistics 2003-2004, Livestock Improvement

Trend in milksolids payout to dairy farmers since 1983/84

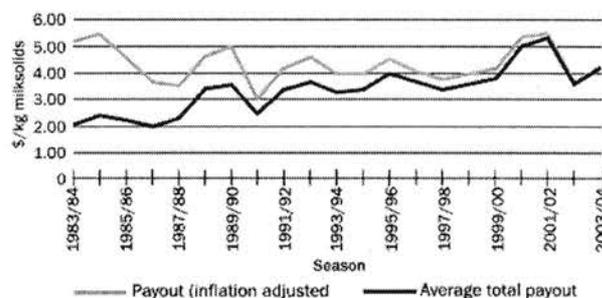


Figure 2: Dairy Statistics 2003-2004, Livestock Improvement

### Where does branding fit in?

When we consider the trends in payout (Fig. 2), and land prices (Fig. 1), for those in purely operational roles the limiting factor for their businesses to grow into land ownership is a lack of capital. With this in mind a need to brand and market the operation to investors will become increasingly necessary to achieve growth in the future.

At a field day for Sharemilkers, on the Hauraki Plains, Gary Thorne, North Island Dairy Manager for Landcorp Farms stated *"I am looking for people with proven skills in staff management and management systems that demonstrate a capability that will see them perform well on a Landcorp farm"*.

<b>Sharemilking Statistics</b>		<b>94/95</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>03/04</b>
Average Herd Size	50/50	<b>224</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>326</b>
	Owner/Operator	<b>193</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>302</b>
Total 50/50 Jobs		<b>3642</b>	<b>3522</b>	<b>3372</b>	<b>3072</b>
Total Cows in National Herd		<b>2.73m</b>	<b>3.23m</b>	<b>3.49m</b>	<b>3.85m</b>

*Figure 3: Dairy Statistics 2003-2004, Livestock Improvement*

Systems and procedures, and a proven business model that are communicated to the industry will become increasingly important to attract the right opportunities. Increasingly, we are seeing investors purchasing land to

expose themselves to the capital appreciation, therefore there is likely to be an increasing need for these types of investors to form partnerships with proven operators.

## **What is the value?**

*Ability to grow and create wealth through strong partnerships.*

*Value will be realised with the demand for a proven operator. To the investor those operators that have branded their business model, and have proven outcomes, will have a clear advantage over the rest. It is this that investors will be requiring to maximise returns.*

## 5. Preferred Supplier

### **The target group – Suppliers of goods and services**

Within the dairy farming operation there are a large pool of suppliers all looking to sell a product or service.

If we look at an average dairy operation that has a 50% expense structure, we can see there is substantial revenue suppliers are receiving from the industry.

Eg. 250 cows @ 300ms = 75,000ms

therefore @\$4/ms = \$300,000

**50% costs = \$150,000**

From this it is clear that this is a competitive market, and as with any business each company is looking for ways to market themselves to become a preferred supplier, capturing greater market share.

### **Where does branding fit ?**

There is an opportunity here to create value for companies you associate with, therefore providing the platform to produce a win/win partnership.

A branding strategy that promotes awareness and perception for a dairy operation must also have the same impact on any associated businesses. Businesses like to be associated with professional, high profile organisations. This can add value to their business through marketing (awareness) and endorsement.

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"Help others be profitable, so they help us be profitable"

**Greg Glover,**  
Drumlea Farms

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<sup>3</sup>*"Communication with financiers and suppliers is all about giving those who deal with you a reputation to live up to. If they're aware of the high standards and values to which you work then to become a preferred supplier to your business they also need to recognise and be constantly reminded of your business standards."*

## What is the value?

*Associating with the 'right' companies reinforces your brand.*

*If suppliers are extracting value from an association with a strategically branded organisation then one could assume some value must be able to be realised from this. The association itself demonstrates an endorsement of that product or service.*

*It would be advantageous to suppliers to be "preferred supplier" to businesses that demonstrate professionalism and growth, thereby creating growth for them. The value is in the extra sales that may result; therefore there is an increased ability to negotiate deals.*

### *Efficiencies*

*If we can help others be more efficient in delivering on their service (eg accountants, contractors, etc), then a reflection of this efficiency is likely to be found in their charges.*

### *Timing of services.*

*When dealing with contractors supplying a service to your operation, timing of that service can have quite an impact on profit. A strategically negotiated relationship will have the potential to reap some benefits with well-managed timing. Planning purchasing requirements in advance, and informing suppliers of these, in turn allows them to plan stock purchases accordingly, thereby gaining efficiencies.*

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*"We found that branding our farms, so they all came under one umbrella, had a positive effect on suppliers. They were easily able to identify individual farms as part of the one large entity, and gave us the service that the group had worked to achieve.*

**Dean Nikora, BEL Group**

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## 6. Relationships with Financiers

### **The target group – Financial Institutions**

One of the most significant partnerships any business will form is with financiers.

Financiers provide the capital for investment and growth. They enable businesses to grasp opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach. With any new investment, an analysis of the risk associated with the venture will be undertaken and a decision whether or not to pursue it. As with any investment, the higher the perceived risk, the higher the interest.

### **Where does branding fit ?**

A brand that represents a clear direction and understanding of a business' strengths has the ability to immediately illustrate a professional approach to business and a pro-active approach to risk management.

Being associated with a professional organisation, which brands for awareness, perception and strong relationships is an endorsement of your own brand.

### **What is the value?**

*Reduced interest and increased borrowing capacity.*

*“There is no doubt that with any relationship there needs to be a win/win outcome. If financiers can see an operation mitigating risks through professional business practices – not only does this have the value (to the bank) of a sound, solid investment, it adds value to the operation through the potential to decrease interest rates, and increasing borrowing capacity.”*

**Glenn Holmes**, ASB Rural Manager

It could be argued that a business can still demonstrate an ability to mitigate risk and a prudent attitude to borrowing without a full branding initiative, but again it is about giving those who deal with you a reputation to live up to.

## 7. The Big Picture

With the seemingly never-ending requirement for quality, traceability and accountability, farmers need to introduce systems that increase profitability. Not just systems for the sake of systems, but 'smart business' systems. Consistency will empower your system, thus creating opportunities that may not have been explored.

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*"Overseas customers like to see prosperous looking farmers; this shows there is the ability to reinvest and grow".*

### **Shigeru Yoshifuku**

Market Liaison Manager, Fonterra Operations

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Farmers with a professional approach to the way they do business can do much to enhance the prospects of the industry as a whole. There are kilometres of farm road frontage, which has an impact on the perception of the dairy industry.

### **Sustainability**

As the public focus on environmental and animal welfare issues is heightened it is important New Zealand farmers are perceived to be professional in their approach to managing these resources. An environment needs to be created where the community sees that you respect the environmental, animal and human resources. Dairy farmers need to be proactive and demonstrate a genuine commitment to managing risks and resources.

Best practices need to be employed and communicated and a genuine concern shown to the long-term sustainability of the industry.

### **Foreign Markets**

Fonterra is investing in large, new markets, and to maintain our reputation in the market place we need to be ahead of the competitors, not just in products, but also in processes.

The dairy industry has changed markedly over the years. In the past customers would buy products simply on appearance, and a few tests. As the demand for consistently higher quality product increased, so did the testing and sampling of products, which was costly. We are now seeing a move forward from this, to quality assured processes that automatically ensure high quality product. To confirm systems are effective, testing to ensure all areas of the process chain are meeting the required food safety standard will not be eliminated. Increasingly customers need to see transparency, record keeping and processes throughout the whole supply chain.

Foreign customers visit the Fonterra sites, personnel and suppliers to ensure all parts of the supply chain are creditable. They are looking to increase their knowledge and understanding of the entire industry.

A group of delegates from the EU will be coming out with the intention of carrying out random audits on individual dairy farms, so for the New Zealand dairy industry to grow and create wealth for shareholders, a collective approach to meeting, and surpassing international standards, is required.

## **Where does branding fit in?**

With operators taking the initiative and responsibility for the industry, in turn a strong brand for New Zealand dairy products in the global marketplace will be created, thus improving returns for shareholders.

Fonterra is trying to develop new markets, and clearly, bad publicity is not good for any industry. A strategically branded, well-communicated, sustainable management of resources, with best on-farm practices, will enhance the attitude of the public towards further development and growth.

Our industry is based on the sale of milk-based products, so any negative perception of the industry would see a negative impact on this.

## **To the future...**

*For businesses to be viewed as a 'preferred supplier' by Fonterra, provides opportunities to be involved with special projects that can add value - for example, the Super Kosher milk programme and the Stolle milk programme.*

*We have no way of knowing what these opportunities may be, at the moment, but to be viewed as a preferred supplier for Fonterra will enable doors to be open when the time comes.*

*Landcorp's change in policy, replacing 50/50 sharemilkers with Farm Managers, was partially a result of the company wanting to have direct control over the stock and milk produced, enabling them to move on any signals sent out from the market for any particular product requirements.*

**Gary Thorne**, Landcorp Farms North Island dairy Manager

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*"There is no difference in the milk from Australia, Britain, United States or New Zealand – what creates the difference is our New Zealand brand."*

**Greg Glover**, Shareholders Councillor

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## 8. How to Brand

**Branding will not have merit if it is a stand-alone strategy. It needs to be adopted as part of best practice for aspects of the business including business planning, monitoring, people management, systemising, and use of technologies consistent with the performance level expected of the business.**

### **Business Plan**

A business plan is the first step in understanding your brand. A business plan should outline the following:

- Values and Mission statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Areas for action
- Resources available
- Financial analysis
- Detail of current operation
- Long term direction
- SWOT analysis
- Monitoring procedures

With these topics documented it creates a clear picture and direction for your business, it illustrated what you are about and the ethics or values to you wish to do business by.

### **Policies and Procedures**

“Smart” business systems need to be adopted to not only comply with the values and objectives of your business, but also reduce costs through increased efficiencies.

### **Communication with Stakeholders**

Having documented your business with a plan, and set policies and procedures the next step of the process needs to communicate these to stakeholders.

**Employees:** Will need to understand the values of the organization, the basis for decision making and what standard is expected of them. Communication needs to be two way, so employers are aware of what motivations and goals the employee has.

**Financiers:** Require a copy of the business plan so to illustrate the aspects of the business that is important. It demonstrates the attitude to risk, and the ability for growth. It must be recognised that financiers are your partners, as they supply the capital to fund growth.

**Suppliers:** Need to be aware of the standards and values that you operate your business by, then they will know what is expected of them.

It must be recognised that all stakeholders are partners to your business and communication is vital to ensure full value can be realised. If your business grows, theirs does too.

## Marketing

This is the *planned* message.

Marketing is a function of branding, and makes your brand visually identifiable. It is recognised as representing your unique brand – your values, your systems, your intellectual property. Marketing your business could include all or any of the following:

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**The actual cost to market your brand is quite minimal. Approximately \$1800 for a large sign, plus additional costs for any letterheads, business cards, and/or embroidery on overalls and hats.**

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**Farm appearance:** There is a need for consistency in what we say about our business, and the presentation of our assets – farm buildings, machinery, pasture, fences, trees, and even staff. It is critical to present these in the best possible light, thereby reinforcing our planned message.

**Signage:** Road frontage of a farm provides opportunity to display a planned message ie signage including logo, positioning statement and contact numbers.

**Website:** This is an opportunity to reach a huge audience, to advertise and inform people about your brand. Referring potential employees to a website would be an instant way of promoting the opportunities available within your business to them.

**Other contact points** enabling your business to promote a consistent brand are: Stationery – letterhead, business cards, invoices, company uniforms, company ute, stickers for machinery. These visual elements also give staff a sense of pride in the company, and their part in it.

**AGM with key professional partners:** A yearly meeting with your consultant, accountant, lawyer, financier is an easy way to communicate what is behind your brand, and will offer potential opportunities through their networks.

## 9. Conclusion

This report has discussed the possibility of creating value through branding a dairy operation. There is an entire industry built around the marketing and branding of products and services. Applying these methodologies to branding a dairy farm operation is a relatively new concept, with very few farmers undertaking branding formally. It is difficult to define exactly what value can be realised as there is no statistical data, or formal research.

The farmers that have undertaken a branding initiative have done so primarily to attract quality staff. In doing so they have found it has helped establish strong relationships with other stakeholders, and also a strong sense of pride within the company. Those farmers currently branding their operations reported:

- 1. An increase in staff pride, in being part of a professional, successful organisation.**
- 2. An increase in productivity and the quality of work.**
- 3. Enhanced relationships with suppliers.**
- 4. With values and visions formally stated in the brand, all those associated with the business have a reputation to live up to.**

It is important that farmers don't look at branding as just putting up a sign. The visual identity is an important step in making all aspects of the brand cohesive, but will not stand alone; it must be backed by good business practice, good relationships, and consistently high quality product.

The greatest advantage may well be gained in the future, as farmers take responsibility for the sustainability of the dairy industry, with branding as part of best practice, business planning, systemising, people management and monitoring will in turn enhance the strong brand for New Zealand dairy products in the global marketplace, thus helping to increase returns for all shareholders.

The main points to come out of this report are:

- **If your brand focuses, and communicates, what you do that adds value to stakeholders, you will reap the benefits in that competitive area.**
- **Undertaking a branding process will give you a thorough understanding of your business, therefore enabling you to mitigate risks and exploit areas of opportunity.**
- **Dairy Farmers in New Zealand need to take responsibility for their part in the process chain, to contribute to the growth of the New Zealand dairy industry in the global marketplace.**

## 10. Is Branding For You?

- **What is your target audience?**
- **What is your point of difference?**
- **Has the business got the integrity to support the brand?**
- **Do you want to stand out from the crowd?**

By answering these questions you will get a clear understanding of what is required to consciously manage your reputation.

You may choose to undertake a full branding initiative, with a marketing component, or it may be that you are more comfortable with less of a structured approach to the marketing, but exercise good, professional business practices.

Either way, it is evident that, to enhance the prospect of growth in defined areas of your farming operation, management of 'your' brand is likely to become increasingly important.

## 10. References:

1. Duncan, T., & Moriarty, S. (1997) *Driving Brand Value*
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