



KELLOGG

RURAL LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME



CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY'S DAIRY WORKFORCE

Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme

Course 55 2026

Kate Tomlinson

I wish to thank the Kellogg Programme Investing Partners for their continued support.



Disclaimer

In submitting this report, the Kellogg Scholar has agreed to the publication of this material in its submitted form.

This report is a product of the learning journey taken by participants during the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme, with the purpose of incorporating and developing tools and skills around research, critical analysis, network generation, synthesis and applying recommendations to a topic of their choice. The report also provides the background for a presentation made to colleagues and industry on the topic in the final phase of the Programme.

Scholars are encouraged to present their report findings in a style and structure that ensures accessibility and uptake by their target audience.

This publication has been produced by the scholar in good faith on the basis of information available at the date of publication. On occasions, data, information, and sources may be hidden or protected to ensure confidentiality and that individuals and organisations cannot be identified.

Readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content of this publication & the Programme or the scholar cannot be liable for any costs incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying solely on the information in this publication.

This report is copyright, but dissemination of this research is encouraged, providing the Programme and author are clearly acknowledged.

Scholar contact details may be obtained through the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust for media, speaking and research purposes.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Acknowledgements	4
This is Water	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Purpose of the research	7
3. Literature Review	8
3.1 Dairy in New Zealand	8
3.2 Canterbury's Dairy Industry	8
3.3 History of Canterbury's Dairy Industry	9
3.4 Historic Trends of Labour Shortage	10
3.5 Where do New Zealand's dairy workers come from?	11
3.6 Diversity of dairy workforce	11
3.7 New Zealand Immigration – Position	13
3.8 Current Visas into Dairy	13
3.9 Arrival in New Zealand	15
3.10 Culture	16
3.11 Frameworks for Understanding Cultural Difference	17
3.12 Managing Multicultural Teams	23
3.13 Cultural Intelligence	23
3.14 Cultural Broker	25
3.15 Language	25
3.16 High Performing Teams in Dairy – What makes a good team?	26
3.17 Research Gap	27
4. Methodology	28
4.1 Research Design	28
4.2 Census Data	28
4.3 Interviews	30
4.4 Use of Artificial Intelligence	32
5. Participant Profile	33
6. Ethnic Composition of Canterbury's Dairy Workforce	35
6.1 National Comparison	35
6.2 Who is in Canterbury's Dairy Workforce?	37
6.3 Looking ahead	40
6.4 Summary	40
7. Pathway to Dairy and Motivators	41

7.1 Pathway to Dairy.....	41
7.2 Motivators for entering dairy.....	42
7.3 Does prior dairy experience shape who enters the industry?	45
8. Composition of Canterbury's Multicultural Teams.....	47
8.1 Observations	48
8.2 Structural Intervention.....	48
8.3 Managerial Intervention.....	48
8.4 "Personality over Culture" Recruitment.....	49
9. Cultural Differences	50
9.1 Cultural Differences - Communication.....	51
9.2 Cultural Differences Explored – Behavioural.....	55
10. Language and Non-Native Speakers	58
11. Adaption, Enablers and Translators	62
11.1 The Enablers	63
11.2 The Translators.....	65
11.3 Tools and Technology.....	66
11.4 What would help people adapt?	67
11.5 Going Forwards	67
12. Discussion	68
13. Limitations	72
14. Conclusion	73
15. Recommendations and Next Steps	74
15.1 For Managers.....	74
15.2 For Industry	75
References.....	76
Appendices	81
Appendix 1 – Meyer's Culture Map Dimension Explored	81
Appendix 2 – Cleaning Census Data	82
Appendix 3 - Interview Questions.....	84
Appendix 4 – Participant Information Sheet.....	85
Appendix 5 – Participant Consent Form	86
Appendix 6 – Additional demographic details of participants.....	88
Appendix 7 – Regional Ethnic Breakdown (2023)	89

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Count of dairy employees, top 10 districts and regions.....	9
Figure 2 Canterbury Dairy Farming Area (ha) 1982 - 83 to 2008 - 09	10
Figure 3 Source of new entrance to the dairy sector.	11
Figure 4 Ethnic diversity of New Zealand dairy workforce, 2022	12
Figure 5 National Dairy Industry Annual Workforce Composition 2005 - 2024.....	12
Figure 6 Dairy Visa Pathways (adapted from DairyNZ)	14
Figure 7 The Culture Factor - Comparison of Argentina, New Zealand, Philippines and United Kingdom.....	18
Figure 8 New Zealand mapped on Meyer's (2014) Country Mapping Tool.....	19
Figure 9 Mapping of New Zealand, India, and Philippines on the Culture Map	20
Figure 10 Mapping of New Zealand, Ireland and U.K.	22
Figure 11 The Four Dimensions of Cultural Intelligence	24
Figure 12 Spectrum of interview question types	30
Figure 13 Naeem et al. (2023's) Thematic Analysis Model	32
Figure 14 Participant Profile - Ethnicity	33
Figure 15 Role of Participants	34
Figure 16 Gender of Participants	34
Figure 17 Comparison of Canterbury Census Data (Ethnicity Level 1) 2023 & DairyNZ National Data 2022.....	35
Figure 18 Dairy Workforce Ethnic Composition by Region – compared between Māori and New Zealand European (New Zealand) and Other Ethnicities	36
Figure 19 Canterbury's Dairy Workforce Composition (2023)	38
Figure 20 2013 - 2023 Canterbury dairy workforce – percentage point change	39
Figure 21 Participant Entry to NZ Dairy Industry. Work visa here refers to an AEWV.	41
Figure 22 Ethnicity and Role of Participants	88

List of Tables

Table 1: WHV Requirements for Entry to New Zealand	14
Table 2 What are the accepted cultural norms in New Zealand and The Philippines?	21
Table 3 ANZCO definitions of roles in dairy farming (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).	29
Table 4 Māori and New Zealand European Composition	37
Table 5 Changing composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce	39
Table 6 Team Composition of participants interviewed	47
Table 7 Cultural Differences observed on farm	50

Executive Summary

Canterbury's dairy industry and migration to the region have been intertwined since the industry's expansion in 1992. Today, migrant workers occupy a significant proportion of Canterbury's dairy industry – but what is this proportion? What kind of teams are operating in Canterbury? What are the realities of working in or leading multicultural teams?

This research took two stages; analysis of secondary census data (2013 – 2023) and semi-structured interviews with 32 participants from 14 countries working in Canterbury's dairy industry. This research primarily views experiences through a migrant lens.

Canterbury's Cultural Composition

This research finds that Canterbury is the most ethnically diverse region in New Zealand's dairy industry, and that multicultural teams are now the norm rather than the exception. At 36% of the workforce from overseas, against the Waikato's 18% and Taranaki's 8%, Canterbury is structurally different to other regions. This does not account for who occupies worker roles compared to farm ownership and management roles. As such, training and support should be adapted specifically for this workforce.

The shift has been rapid. Between 2013 and 2023, New Zealand European representation fell from 74% to 57%, while 20 other ethnic groups grew to fill the gap. The Filipino workforce grew the fastest, from 6% to nearly 16%, to become the second largest group in Canterbury's dairy workforce.

Culture

Cultural differences are embedded in daily life in Canterbury's dairy industry. All participants could identify possible cultural differences, though few could identify why they occurred. Despite the range of nationalities in the workforce, most differences raised related to Filipino workers. Given the growth of the Filipino population in NZ dairy farming and differing cultural values and norms compared to other ethnicities, this might not be surprising.

Personality, culture, language, visa insecurity and structural foundations all shaped how the migrant workforce behaved. Which was at play was rarely clear to someone observing through their own cultural frame alone. What looks like a personality trait, such as being shy, a lack of initiative or a reluctance to speak up, may be a different cultural frame, shaped by hierarchy, values such as *hiya*, language confidence, or visa insecurity. Understood properly, these are simply a different starting point a manager can look to bridge – an extension of current industry advice on “knowing your people”.

Functioning multicultural teams were the norm in this research, though varying levels of friction were present. Whether those teams were functioning or thriving, however, was a different story. Thriving teams were underpinned by an environment where people were retained, worked safely, spoke up, understood each other, and found ways to adapt around cultural and language barriers. What set those teams apart was that cultural and language differences were acknowledged, and adaption was present on both sides - not simply the migrant workforce alone.

Literature defines this as “cultural intelligence”, which many in Canterbury's dairy industry have subconsciously developed through managing or working within multicultural teams.

Yet, cultural intelligence has many forms, and the more we can adopt, the better we can work in and manage our teams:

- **Drive** - do I want to learn about my team's cultures?
- **Knowledge** - do I understand the baselines I work from and what my team works from?
- **Strategy** - can I read a situation and plan how to adjust how I communicate or behave for the best outcome?
- **Action** - do I change how I speak or behave towards different colleagues?

Language

Language carries power. Findings from this study aligned closely to global findings on non-native speakers working in multicultural teams, including how it impacts the development of interpersonal relationships and how it can make team members feel. A vital and widely used tool used to bridge different language proficiencies was WhatsApp and translation apps. This neutral strategy enables effective communication regardless of ethnicity, however, where relied upon too heavily, can negatively influence non-native speakers from improving their English: hindering the development of relationships on farm, integration into New Zealand, contributing to sub-groups forming and limiting the development of safe environments which enable speaking up. Small changes from a leader or others on the team can positively support non-native speakers; encouraging use of English in a safe and empathetic way, slowing down, saying it another way, checking understanding rather than rely on a "yes", or actively encouraging and facilitating learning English.

Team Composition

Composition shapes what played out within a team. No two teams interviewed were the same, from monocultural teams built through networks, to multicultural teams built on values and personality. Every manager with influence over recruitment was shaping their team's composition. Some did so in ways that aligned with proven strategies for managing multicultural teams: composing the team so a shared working language held across it, setting expectation early, or recruiting for personality over culture.

Motivators

Sacrifice, saving and hard work underpin how many people enter into Canterbury's dairy industry. Their why? "The opportunity". The opportunities of NZ's dairy industry are significant enough to justify the friction of working outside someone's native language and away from their own culture, and that trade-off shaped how people behaved in their teams.

The "Enabler"

This research identifies, and names, a role the dairy industry has so far overlooked: the "enabler". Enablers showed up in three ways: those who translate culture and language, those who create a safe environment for people to speak up, and those whose empathy helps newcomers settle in. This is vital on teams with newcomers to the industry and New Zealand. It is less prevalent in well-established teams, where team members are well integrated or have lived in NZ for many years.

Working without title or recognition, they bridge a worker's culture and what the farm needs, so the migrants who fill our labour gap can thrive. What unites them is cultural intelligence: the ability to read across cultures and respond to what people need. This report argues the "enabler" should be recognised, looked for in recruitment with teams of newly arrived migrants, and their traits adopted more widely. If the last decade of demographic change is any guide, the role will only become more essential.

Diversity in Canterbury's dairy industry is now the baseline. The question is no longer whether our teams are diverse, but what more we can do to support and lead them. The more of us who can read across cultures and bridge them, the better we will lead.

Acknowledgements

It's not often in life that we get to acknowledge and appreciate the people who shape and help us, so I'm making the full use of this page.

The participants of the research - First and foremost, to those who shared their experiences with me for this research. Thank you. It's been an honour to step into your world and hear your journeys and experiences of where you are today. I am in awe of what so many of you have achieved and feel a deep sense of respect for your resilience and drive.

The Mackenzie Charitable Foundation – Thank you for making this possible. It might not be everyone's dream to spend their evenings and weekend at their desk trawling through 900,000 lines of census data, but it's mine.

To the Rural Leaders team – What a phenomenal bunch. Thank you for crafting a unique experience of openness, learning and vulnerability that enables such growth.

To those who kindly gave their advice, contacts and expertise – Jane Muir, Jane Fowles, Fi McKay, Robyn Dynes, Caroline Aymes, Lucy Hall, Colin Glass, Zac Elkin.

My New Zealand family – Ian, Briggs, Alistair and Ashleigh. Holly Fletcher-Smith, Jeanette Churches, Cath Herniman, Nina, Jess, James, Fraser, Wouter, Ashleigh and Andrew. Where would I be without you!

My Cohort – Dynamic and fun and curious. It's been an absolute pleasure!

To Michael and my Map of Ag team – for your support with taking part in this programme.

To Jon Manhire – for taking a chance on me when I arrived in NZ and showing me what is possible with the right attitude. To Chloe, Jorie, Dan Smith. You're all legends too.

To all I love and miss back home. A world away, but never too far.

To my family - I now realise that the saying "you eventually turn into your parents" is coming true; it has just manifested in a different way than we all might have expected.

Dad, for every holiday that you sat in bars waiting for somebody to come and chat to, like the South Korean chicken farmer who didn't speak a word of English but became your best friend with slaps on the back and Google Translate... it all makes sense.

Mam, Grandma, for getting on a plane/boat and traveling to countries that other people might have never heard of when others didn't do that sort of thing - good on you.

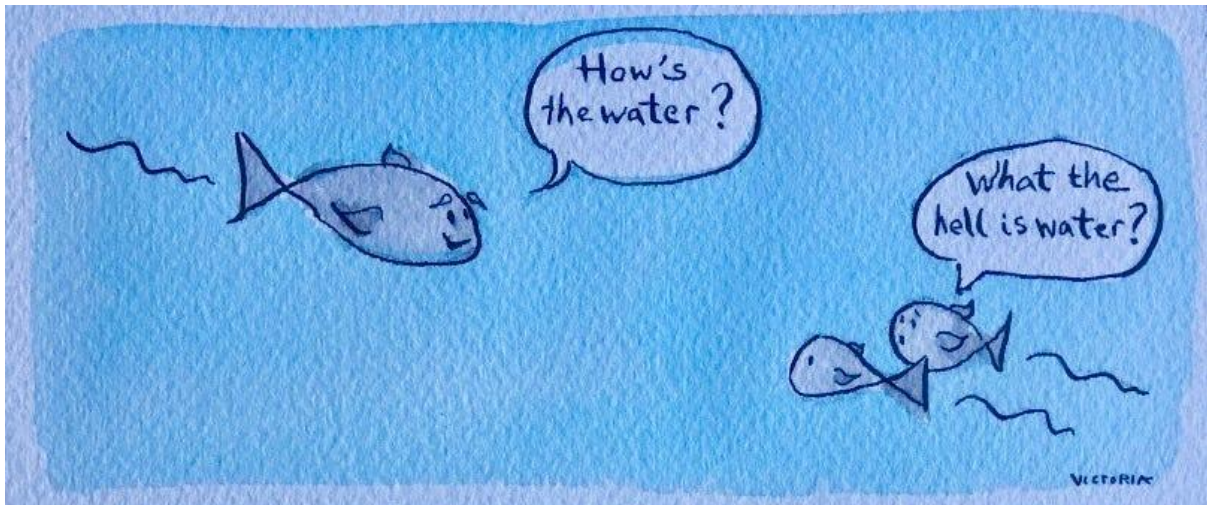
To my brothers – for letting me be the "what's she up to next?" sibling. One of us had to step up. Hopefully one day you'll get off the farm and see the wonderful place I now live in. Rob – you will love the mountains, the people, the warmth of this place. Will - darling little brother - please stop telling people I live in Australia. Australia and New Zealand are two different countries. It's been nearly 4 years. I live in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

"He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata."

"What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people".

Māori whakataukī (traditional proverb).

This is Water



There are two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way.

The older fish nods at them and says "Good morning! How's the water?"

The two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and says:

"What the hell is water?"

Adapted from Wallace, D. F. (2009).

1. Introduction

With larger farms and more cows than any other region, Canterbury's dairy industry has filled labour shortages with those from other regions and overseas for over three decades. Yet, the cultural make-up of each dairying region remains largely undocumented. Existing guidance on building good dairy teams recommends leadership, recruitment, and "knowing your people," but makes no explicit mention of Canterbury's multicultural reality - the different languages, backgrounds, and expectations that a single team now holds. As a result, there is little to draw on that reflects the workforce itself; for those managing these teams, and for the people working within them.

The approach to this research was sequential: first, to understand the composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce and whether it differs from other regions; and second, drawing on the experiences of both migrant workers and those alongside them, to examine the realities of working within these teams. Who are the people on Canterbury's dairy farms and why did they join the industry? What frictions do they experience, and why? What helps these multicultural teams thrive and what more can our Canterbury leaders do?

2. Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to understand how cultural diversity shapes the experiences and working relationships within Canterbury's dairy teams.

It does this in two steps: first, identifying the ethnic composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce; and second, examining those experiences and relationships through the perspectives, worldviews and cultures of the people within it.

As a starting point, the following were investigated:

- What is the composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce, and how has it changed over the last ten years?
- What are the pathways into the industry, and what motivates people to enter it?
- What kinds of teams exist in Canterbury's dairy industry?
- What cultural differences are observed and why might they be arising?

Given the limited research into this space, the purpose was not only to answer these questions, but to look beyond them; to ask not only what occurs, but why, and where the gaps lie.

Pairing literature on migration, adaptation, multicultural team management, language and cultural intelligence with the observations from this study, the research set out to tell the story of Canterbury's dairy multicultural workforce. From that picture, it draws recommendations on two fronts: what an individual managing or working in a multicultural team might consider, and what the wider industry can do to support these teams to thrive.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Dairy in New Zealand

New Zealand's dairy sector is world-renowned. As the world's largest dairy exporter by volume, exporting over 90% of domestic production, it accounts for a quarter of the global dairy trade value and generated more than one in every \$4 of New Zealand's foreign exchange receipts from goods and services exports in 2026 (MPI, 2025; DairyNZ, 2026a).

At the forefront of production is the Canterbury region.

3.2 Canterbury's Dairy Industry

High Production

Canterbury is consistently one of the highest-producing regions per hectare (ha) and per herd in New Zealand. In 2023, North Canterbury had the highest average herd production in the South Island at 343,077 kg of milk solids per herd, and the highest average milk solids per hectare at 1,503 kg MS/ha (LIC and DairyNZ, 2023).

Large Herd Sizes

Canterbury's dairy herds are the largest in New Zealand. North Canterbury has the largest average herd size, at 796 cows per herd, while South Canterbury has 789 (LIC and DairyNZ, 2025). This has increased from an average herd size of 546 cows in the South Island between 2008 – 2009 (Tipples et al., 2010). The South Island accounts for 43% of the cow population, with only 30% of the herds – highlighting a trend of larger sized farm units in the South Island.

High Employee Ratio

In Canterbury and Southland, 75 to 80% of people on dairy farms are employees (DairyNZ, 2022). The correlation between larger herd sizes, more production and percentage of people on the farm as employees is therefore clear.

High proportion of population employed in dairy

As shown in Figure 1, a significant proportion of Canterbury's population is employed in dairy. In the Selwyn, Ashburton, and Timaru districts, spanning Mid to South Canterbury, dairy is one of the most significant employers, accounting for roughly one in ten jobs (Selwyn and Ashburton) (DairyNZ, 2026).

Strongly supporting jobs and businesses in New Zealand's regions

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Sense Partners

Count of dairy employees. Top 10 districts and regions

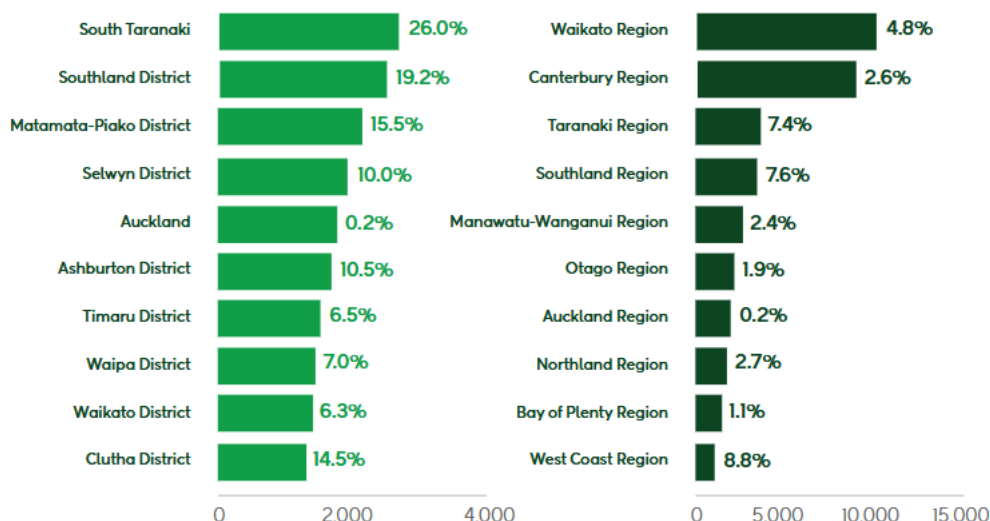


Figure 1 Count of dairy employees, top 10 districts and regions. Selwyn District, Ashburton District, and Timaru District make up three of the top ten (DairyNZ, 2026).

Despite its strong contributions, however, dairy farming in Canterbury is relatively new in the history of New Zealand's dairy industry.

3.3 History of Canterbury's Dairy Industry

Between 1980 and 2009, the land area used for dairying in Canterbury increased by 170,000 hectares, from 20,000 ha to 190,000. Producing just 2% of New Zealand's milk supply between 1982 - 1983, this had grown to 15% by 2008 - 2009 (Pangborn and Woodford, 2011).

Whilst a small number of dairy conversions took place in the 1980s, Canterbury's take-off did not take place until 1992, as displayed in Figure 2.

Drivers of this included:

- Irrigation development and adoption of new technologies
- Reduced profitability of traditional farming systems, such as sheep and cropping, driving land to the market from those exiting the respective industries

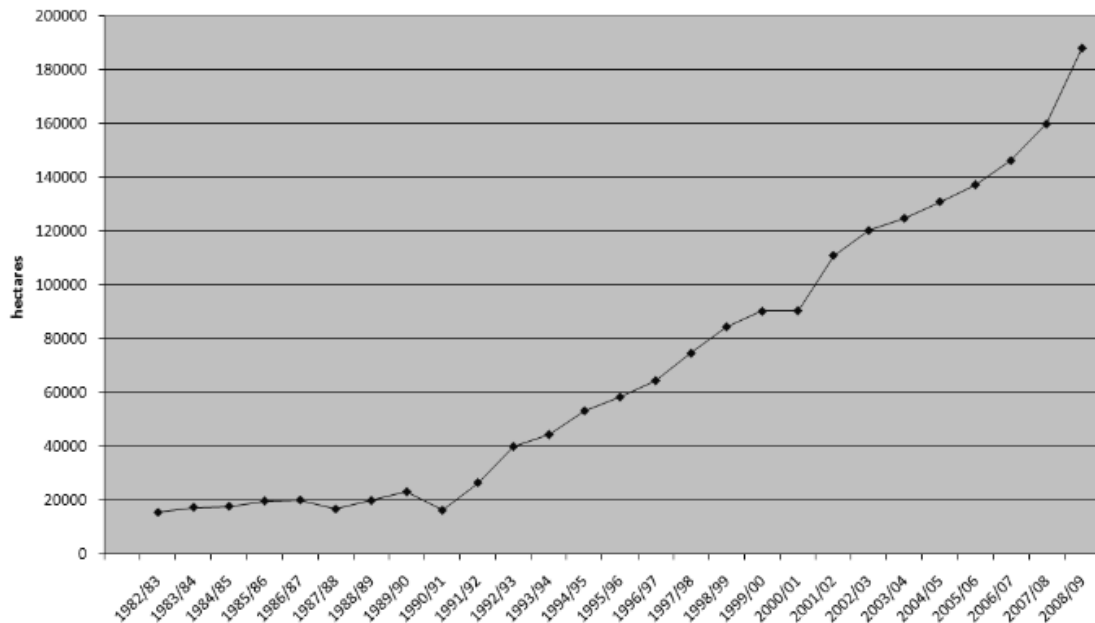


Figure 2 Canterbury Dairy Farming Area (ha) 1982 - 83 to 2008 - 09. Sourced from: Pangborn and Woodford (2011)

The Rangitata Division Race (RDR) brought irrigation to Canterbury in 1944. However, it wasn't until extensive development of underground water sources in the 1990s, as a consequence of submersible pump technology, that drove irrigation developments in the area. Paired with automated booms and pivot irrigation, this led to increased production by 15 - 20%, enabling larger numbers of cows per ha (Pangborn and Woodford, 2011; Dynes et al., 2010).

The relatively lower land prices drove migration to Canterbury from other regions, such as the North Island, and from overseas, namely Holland and the United Kingdom. This is shown by Tipples et al. (2010), who identified that between 1991 and 2006, the number of dairy farmers in the South Island grew from 2,808 to 6,012.

3.4 Historic Trends of Labour Shortage

With the expansion of farms with more cows to milk, more employees were required. Supply, however, could not keep up with demand. Kyte (2007) noted:

"I believe the New Zealand dairy industry is being compromised by understaffing on farms, especially larger units of 600 cows or more".

This was cited as specifically problematic in the South Island.

14 years later, the issue had not been resolved; in a labour market survey conducted by Federated Farmers and DairyNZ in 2021, 57% of farms were identified as short-staffed in Canterbury (DairyNZ, 2021). This was exacerbated by the closing of borders during COVID-19. Almost two-thirds of short-staffed farms required an additional employee, and a third required two employees. This led to existing staff working longer hours, decreasing work quality, less time upskilling and increased stress (DairyNZ, 2021).

An aging farming population, a decline in children willing to take over the family farm, long hours, difficult physical labour and remote farm locations have all contributed to labour shortages, either through a lack of retention or by not being able to attract workers to the

industry (Kambuta et al., 2024; DairyNZ, 2021). In 2022, Dairy NZ (2022) identified that 58 out of 100 new entrants left the industry per year, highlighting the opportunity present for retaining skilled dairy workers.

3.5 Where do New Zealand's dairy workers come from?

With the domestic labour market unable to fill the role, who has?

Tipples et al. (2010) identified that nationally, over 90% of dairy farmers and workers were born in New Zealand, with European descent the most common response. 0.8% of dairy farmers nationally were born in Asia and as of 2006, 24 dairy workers were from the Philippines. Those born overseas and working in dairy were most likely to come from the U.K. This is consistent with national migratory trends across New Zealand (Smits, 2019).

By 2020, most dairy farms in New Zealand reported relying on hired help, with migrants comprising up to 50% of new entrants (DairyNZ 2021). As shown in dark green in Figure 3, migrant entry to the workforce grew from 2012, though suppressed during COVID-19, before growing again from 2023 (DairyNZ, 2021).

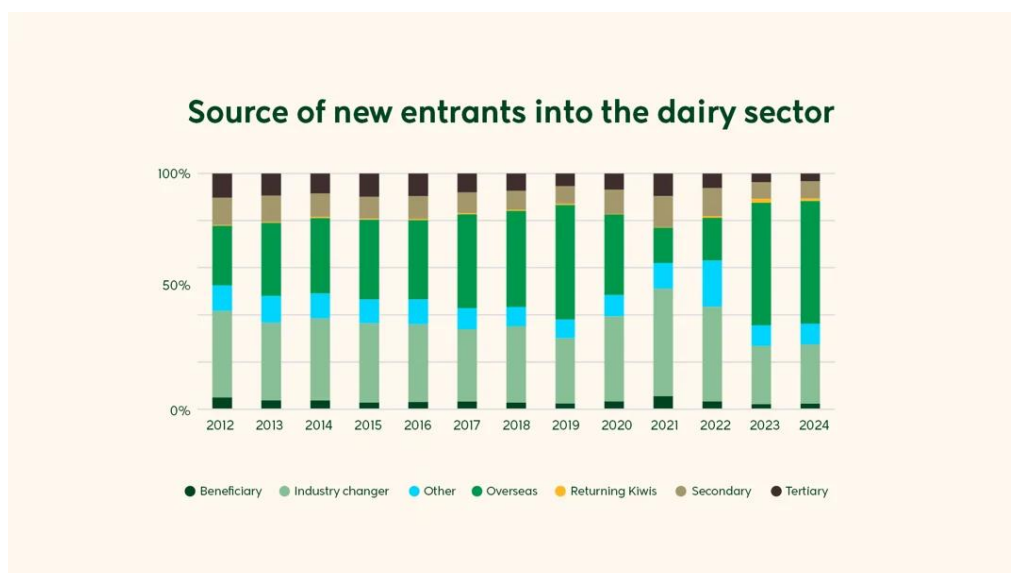


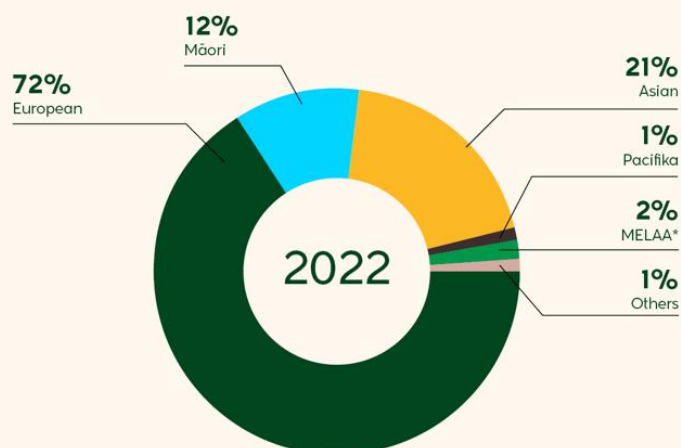
Figure 3 Source of new entrance to the dairy sector (DairyNZ, 2024a).

3.6 Diversity of dairy workforce

The cultural composition of the dairy industry's workforce is tracked by DairyNZ through workforce surveys and Stats NZ data.

According to DairyNZ's 2022 workforce survey, 72% of dairy workers identified as European, 21% as Asian, 12% as Māori, 2% as MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African), and 1% as Pasifika (see Figure 4).

Diversity of people working on dairy farms



*MELAA (Middle eastern, Latin American and African)

Figure 4 Ethnic diversity of New Zealand dairy workforce, 2022 (Source: DairyNZ, 2024a)

This differs slightly from the more granular insights of Figure 5, which show the changes in ethnic diversity of the national dairy workforce from 2005 – 2024.

Differences to Figure 4 can be attributed to the way in which the data is collected, with Figure 5 derived from IDI (Integrated Data Infrastructure) data from Stats NZ. This is a large research database showing microdata about people and households across New Zealand, allowing researchers to analyse workforce patterns. This dataset includes people working in dairy in March of the particular year shown.

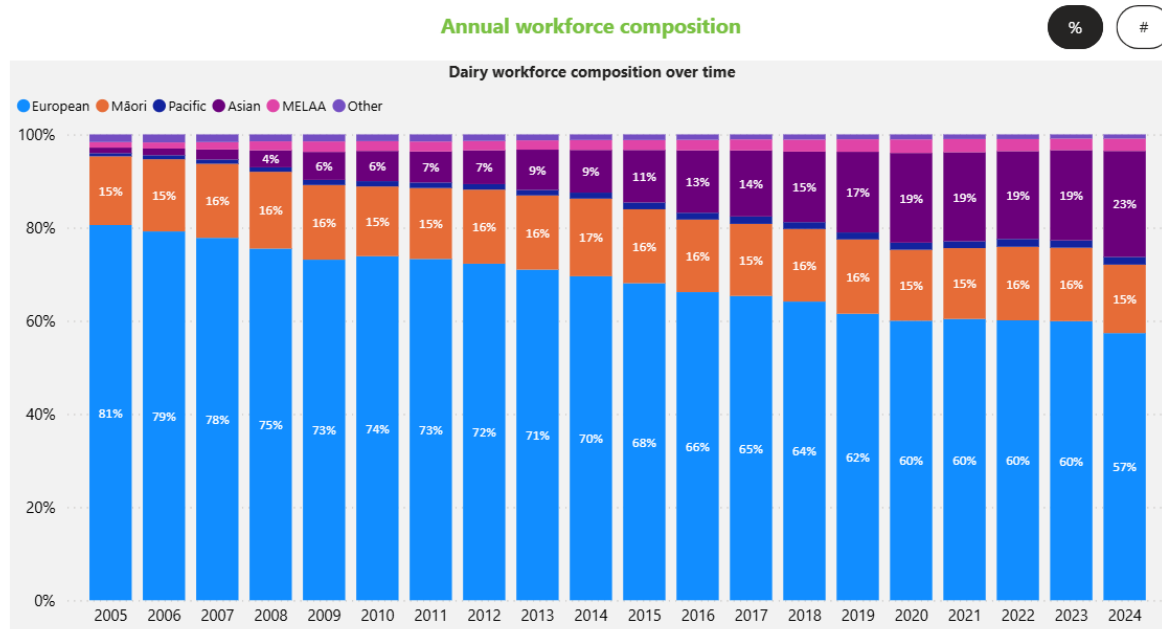


Figure 5 National Dairy Industry Annual Workforce Composition 2005 - 2024 (via personal communication - DairyNZ and NZ Statistics, 2026)

What this shows is a continual reduction of Europeans (New Zealand and Europeans) in New Zealand's dairy industry, from 81% in 2005 to 57% in 2024. Meanwhile, the Asian population has increased from 4% in 2008 to 23% in 2024. Māori population remains constant throughout. A growth in MELAA population can also be observed.

Whilst a descriptive and useful graph to monitor trends in workforce composition, the dataset is high level. It does not distinguish between New Zealand Europeans, British, Irish and Europeans, nor does it provide a specific breakdown of Asia, Pasifika or MELAA categories. It also does not capture regional data, such as the diversity in the Canterbury region.

This is important; country of origin impacts how people arrive in New Zealand and aggregating culturally distinct groups into broad ethnic categories also obscures the individual cultural characteristics of each.

3.7 New Zealand Immigration – Position

New Zealand has primarily had a nationality-based migrant selection system, traditionally favouring those from the United Kingdom. However, from the 1980s onwards, it introduced a skills-based selection and more recently has seen an increasingly staggered system of temporary admission - letting people into the country on time-limited visas (Collins and Bayliss, 2020). Since COVID-19, however, there has been significant change in immigration policy for migrant workers; it now enables highly skilled workers a pathway to residency.

Filipino Migration

In 2007, the Philippines was designated a "comparable labour market", which accelerated the growth of migration from the Philippines to New Zealand. From 2013/2014 onwards, Filipinos constituted the largest immigrant group within the essential skills visa category (Alam et al., 2023).

NZ census data reflects this growth. 15,285 residents were born in the Philippines in 2006, rising to 67,632 in 2018 (Walrond, 2015).

The dairy industry attracts a proportion of these migrants. The number of temporary work permits for Filipinos rose from 16 in 2003/4 (3% of all permits issued for dairy work) to 866 in 2010/11 (51% of the total) (Tipples et al., 2012).

3.8 Current Visas into Dairy

For those migrating to New Zealand to work in the dairy industry, a visa is required (Immigration NZ, 2026; DairyNZ, 2024b). There are varying visas available depending on nationality and existing skillset.

The current visas and pathways available to those entering the dairy industry are detailed below in Figure 6:

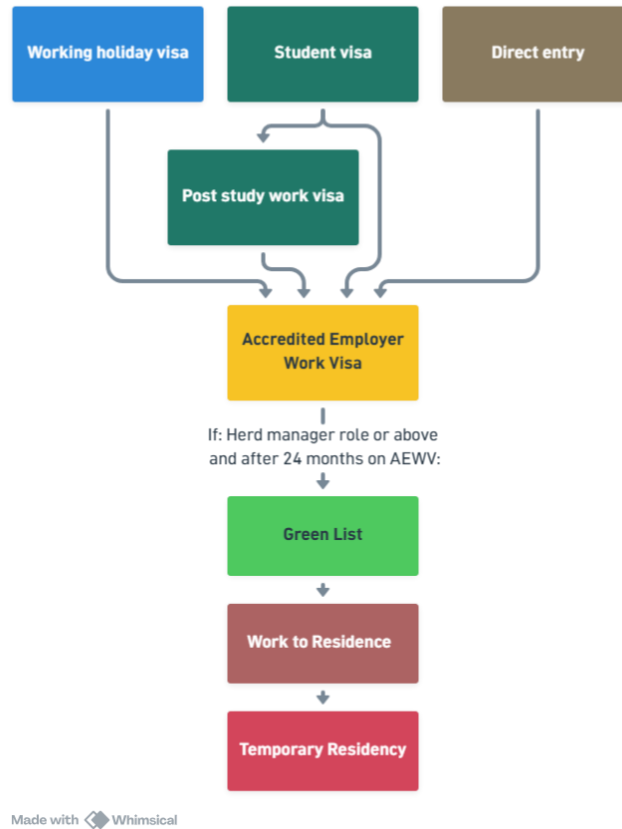


Figure 6 Dairy Visa Pathways (adapted from DairyNZ) (2024b)

Working Holiday Visa (WHV)

The Working Holiday (WHV) Scheme enables those under the age of 30 - 35 from specific countries to enter New Zealand (NZ) to work and travel for a period of 12 - 36 months. NZ has working holiday agreements with 45 countries (Immigration New Zealand, 2025). Nationalities with access to this scheme are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: WHV Requirements for Entry to New Zealand

Nationality	Places per year	Duration	Age limit	Funds required	Medical insurance required	Tertiary degree required	English test required
British	15,000	Up to 36 months	18 - 35	NZD \$350 per month	No	No	No
Irish	Uncapped	12 months	18 - 30	NZD \$4,200	No	No	No
German	Uncapped	12 months	18 - 30	NZD \$4,200	Yes	No	No
Czech	1,200	12 months	18 - 35	NZD \$4,200	Yes	No	No
Argentinian	1,000	12 months	18 - 35	NZD \$4,200	Yes	No	No
Chilean	940	12 months	18 - 35	NZD \$4,200	Yes	No	No
Filipino	100	12 months	18 - 30	NZD \$4,200	Yes	Yes (min. 3 years full-time university)	Yes
Indian*	1,000	TBC	18 - 30	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

*Indian WHV committed under the NZ-India Free Trade Agreement, signed 27 April 2026 but not yet in force. (Adapted from: Immigration New Zealand, 2026; MFAT, 2026).

Working holiday visas hold an important place in enabling certain migrants to enter New Zealand's dairy industry, with DairyNZ (2024b) reporting 1,400 people worked on dairy farms using a working holiday visa that year.

Compared to the requirements of other visas, the WHV can be considered a low barrier to entry; no tertiary degree or English proficiency examinations are required and for some nationalities like British, Irish, and German, extremely high places are available per year (as shown in Table 1 under "Places per year"). At the end of this visa, those wishing to stay within the dairy industry would need to migrate to an AEWV or "Work to Residence" visa, ensuring relevant requirements are met.

Student Visa

The student visa requires an offer of place from an NZQA-accredited institution, evidence of NZD \$20,000 per year in funds, English language proficiency, medical insurance and proof of genuine study intent (Immigration New Zealand, 2026). This is a considerably higher threshold than the WHV.

Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)

The AEWV is the primary pathway for employing international employees on New Zealand dairy farms, with 12% of on-farm dairy employees in 2024 holding a temporary work visa (DairyNZ, 2024b). This is a work visa tied to a specific accredited employer, job, and location. Those using this visa must hold a full-time job offer from an accredited employer, demonstrate two years of work experience in dairy or a relevant Level 4 qualification, and meet English language, health and character requirements (DairyNZ, 2024b).

Green List / Work to Residence

Introduced after COVID-19, the "Green List" provides a work to residence pathway for dairy herd managers, assistant farm managers, and farm manager roles after two years of employment in New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2022). Whilst they didn't report the base year, DairyNZ (2024b) reported that 5,500 of the dairy workforce were New Zealand residents, almost all of whom entered NZ on a temporary work visa.

Residency

Residency removes the visa tie to a single employer, enabling workers to change farms, negotiate conditions freely, and pursue career progression into contract milking, share milking or farm ownership without immigration constraints (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.; Collins & Bayliss, 2020).

3.9 Arrival in New Zealand

Acculturation of Migrants

Berry (1997) investigated the process of cultural change when someone from one culture begins to live within another, a process called acculturation.

He identifies four types of acculturation:

- **Assimilation** - let go of original culture, fully adopt the new one
- **Separation** - keep original culture, avoid the new one
- **Integration** - keep original culture and engage with the new one simultaneously
- **Marginalisation** - lose both the original culture and the new one

Integration was identified as the best acculturation strategy for positive psychological outcomes, including lower stress and greater capacity to navigate cultural contexts.

However, integration is dependent on mutual accommodation, whereby participants from both the host country and incoming country accommodate in some way. This can include changing learning techniques in the host country, whilst individuals migrating to New Zealand disregard certain aspects of their culture that are valued but not adaptive to their new context.

But how long does acculturation take and what influences acculturation?

Host Receptivity and Conformity Pressure

How a host society, such as New Zealand, receives migrants influences acculturation. Surveying 315 Filipino migrants in New Zealand, including those working in dairy farming, Separa et al. (2025) found that how welcoming locals are supported adaptation of migrants. This reinforces Berry's (1992) argument of mutual accommodation.

Unexpectedly, however, host conformity pressure, which is the pressure for migrants to adopt local norms, also helped Filipinos adapt rather than hindering it. This was linked to the Filipino value of *pakikisama* (harmonising with the group) and to the need to keep their jobs on temporary visas.

Personality

Acculturation is considered an ongoing process, with no clear timescales. However, Schmitz and Schmitz (2022) suggested that personalities with high openness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were more associated with integration. They were also more proactive in learning the language of the country they have moved to and understanding cultural norms. This suggests that personality type influences the speed at which migrants acculturate and which form of acculturation they take.

Language Proficiency

Lueck & Wilson (2010) argued that bilingual migrants can better engage with the culture of their host country. They imply language is one of the strongest predictors of integration capacity.

Visa and Legal Status

Oudenhoven and Ward (2013) reason that structural conditions like visa status and length of stay in a country affect the strategy pursued; for example, workers with residency are more likely to integrate than temporary workers. This could be disputed; however, considering the cultural similarities and differences of those moving to New Zealand.

Discrimination

Lueck and Wilson (2010) suggest that discrimination pushes individuals towards separation or marginalisation.

3.10 Culture

What is culture?

Hofstede (2001) defines culture as the collective mental programming of the human mind, which distinguishes one group of people from another. These are developed within families,

in early childhood and reinforced in schools and organisations. This influences patterns of thinking and influences the meaning people and societies attach to various aspects of life.

A cultural difference is therefore the inverse - where the collective programming of two or more groups collide, producing different values, norms, and expected behaviours in the same situation.

3.11 Frameworks for Understanding Cultural Difference

Acknowledging that multicultural teams and managers require tools to understand and support those from different cultures, Hofstede (2001) and Meyer (2014) offer frameworks for use in management and workplaces. Hofstede's work is widely regarded as the most influential framework for measuring national cultural differences in management research, and explaining the values of cultures, whilst Meyer translates this into observable behaviour. Further work by McKay (2022) set out to map cultural differences through "The Cultural Atlas".

Hofstede

Underpinned by 116,000 questionnaire responses collected between 1967 and 1973 from a large multinational business organisation (IBM) with employees in 70 countries, Hofstede (2001)'s research cites five domains:

- **Power Distance** – the extent to which less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed equally.
- **Individualism** – the degree to which individuals look after themselves or remain integrated in groups, usually around family.
- **Masculinity** – refers to the emotional distribution between genders.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance** – the degree to which a society tries to control the uncontrollable.
- **Long term and short-term orientation** – the extent to which a culture programs its members to accept delayed gratification of their needs.

The surveys asked employees about their values, preferences, and attitudes at work. Despite employees undertaking the same role, they gave systematically different answers. Hofstede (2001) concluded that the difference was national, placing culture as the varying factor.

A criticism of Hofstede's work is that it is over 50 years old. Cultures change within countries, meaning these five dimensions may be outdated. McSweeney (2002) also criticises Hofstede's work; arguing that IBM employees are not representative of national populations and that treating countries as culturally uniform ignores within-country variation.

This was supported by Kirkman et al., (2009), who argued that an individual's own relationship with hierarchy and authority matters more than where they are from. Importantly, they also warn against generalisation – the concept that all people of the same culture share the same characteristics.

Whilst these criticisms should be kept in mind, the framework remains widely used for comparing national cultural differences and, when used alongside other frameworks and with an awareness of individual variation, provides a useful starting point for understanding

cultural dynamics. Hofstede's 2001 work has since been updated and used to develop "The Country Comparison Tool", an example of which is shown in Figure 7.

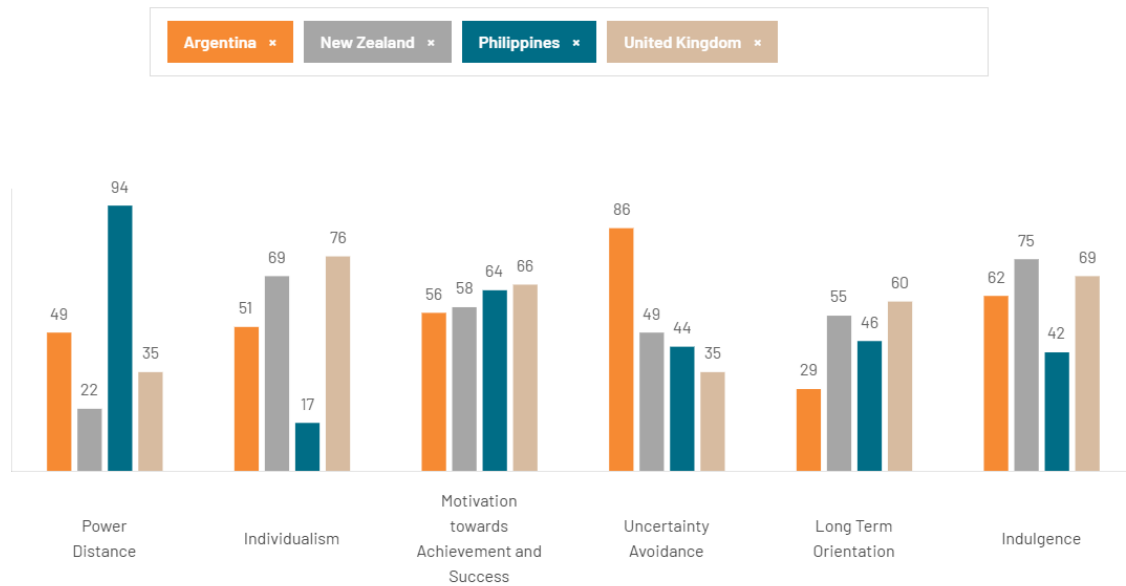


Figure 7 The Culture Factor - Comparison of Argentina, New Zealand, Philippines and United Kingdom.

It is useful to interpret this figure by considering where New Zealand sits against other countries. Attention should be paid to large differences, as it is here that cultural differences are likely to occur. Source: The Culture Factor (2026).

From this, power distance and individualism are the two most important dimensions that translate cultural values to "The Culture Map's" behaviours.

The Culture Map

Meyer (2014) provides a practitioner framework identifying how cultural differences impact behaviour in the workplace. Despite not being peer-reviewed research and not accounting for individual variation within cultures, it does identify behaviours considered normal, expected, and appropriate within different countries. When comparing to a cultural baseline, such as New Zealand, this can be helpful.

The framework has eight dimensions of cultural behaviour:

- **Communicating** - how explicitly messages are communicated.
- **Evaluating** - how negative feedback is delivered.
- **Leading** – the expected level of hierarchy between a boss and their team.
- **Trusting** - how trust is built between colleagues.
- **Disagreeing** - how disagreement and conflict are handled.
- **Deciding** - how decisions are made.
- **Scheduling** - how time and deadlines are managed.

- **Persuading** - how arguments and ideas are structured.

McSweeney's (2002) criticism that Hofstede's approach to treating countries the same ignores within-country variation can also be applied to Meyer, though her work is more recent.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for further explanations of each dimension.

An Example: New Zealand

Herodotus, a fifth century Greek scholar, proposed that all humans are ethnocentric and use their own cultures as the standard to evaluate other cultures (Ang et al., 2015). This is no different to dairy farmers managing or working in multicultural teams.

Therefore, to enable comparison with other cultures, let us first understand New Zealand's cultural baseline. This will be described using Hofstede and Meyer's frameworks. In doing so, it is acknowledged that these tools do not distinguish between New Zealand and Māori culture, which is a significant limitation.

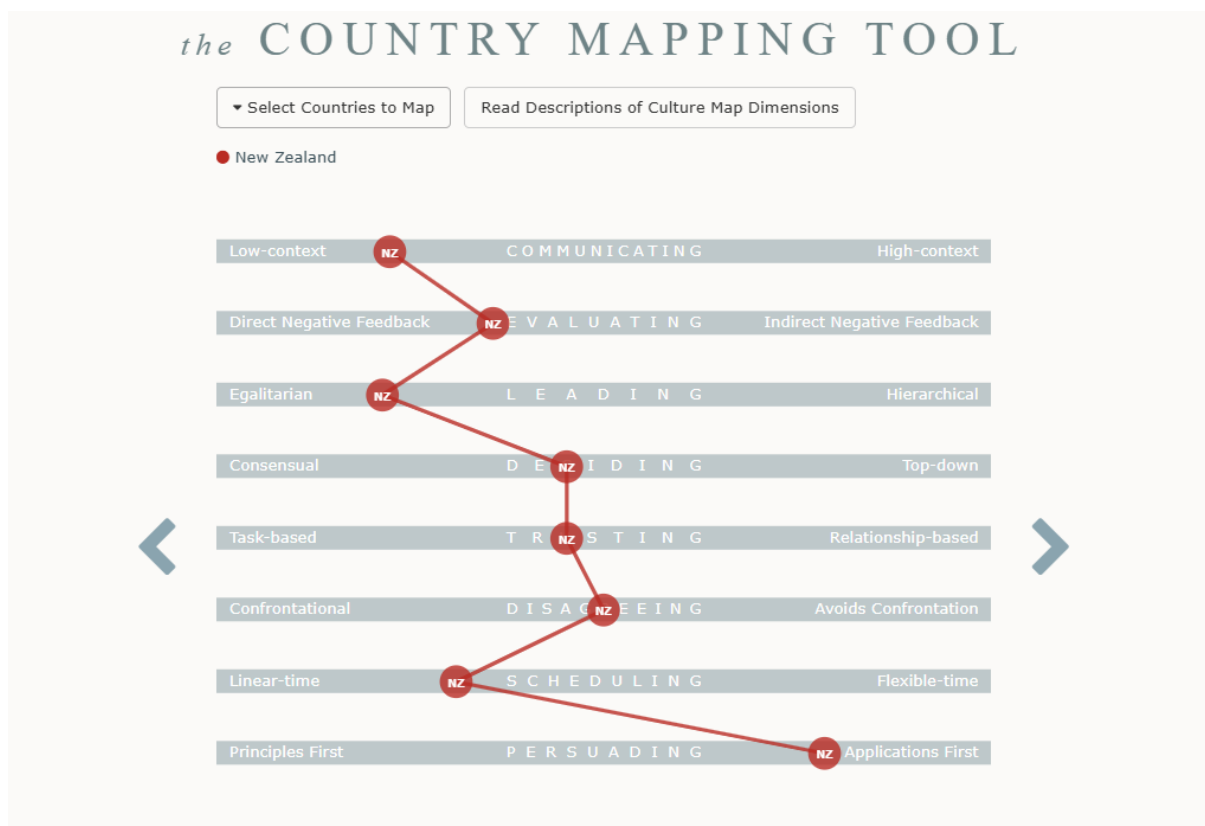


Figure 8 New Zealand mapped on Meyer's (2014) Country Mapping Tool

Figure 8 shows that New Zealand sits at the low-context end of Meyer's communicating scale, meaning that communication is explicit, clear, and stated plainly.

There is an egalitarian leadership style, meaning everyone is considered equal, regardless of title or age. This is supported by Hofstede's scoring of New Zealand under "Power Distance" as 22, one of the lowest in the world, indicating a culture where hierarchy is minimal and authority is accessible. This can be viewed in Figure 7, on the previous page. Smits (2019) supports this, commenting that egalitarianism is a key part of New Zealand's national identity, dating back to the 1930s.

New Zealand sits centrally in the confrontational scale, though leans toward confrontation. This suggests a willingness to raise issues openly and is consistent with Hofstede's individualism score of 79, which places New Zealand among the most individualist cultures in the world. Here, issues are usually treated as separate from personal relationships, making open disagreement less culturally risky.

Combining these considerations with direct negative feedback and linear-time scheduling, the New Zealand cultural profile reflects a workplace where issues are raised openly, hierarchy is flat, and conflict is functional rather than personal.

How does this compare to other cultures?

By contrast, the Philippines (in orange) sits at the opposite end of each scale to New Zealand on Figure 9. India (in yellow) also sits at the other end of the scale.

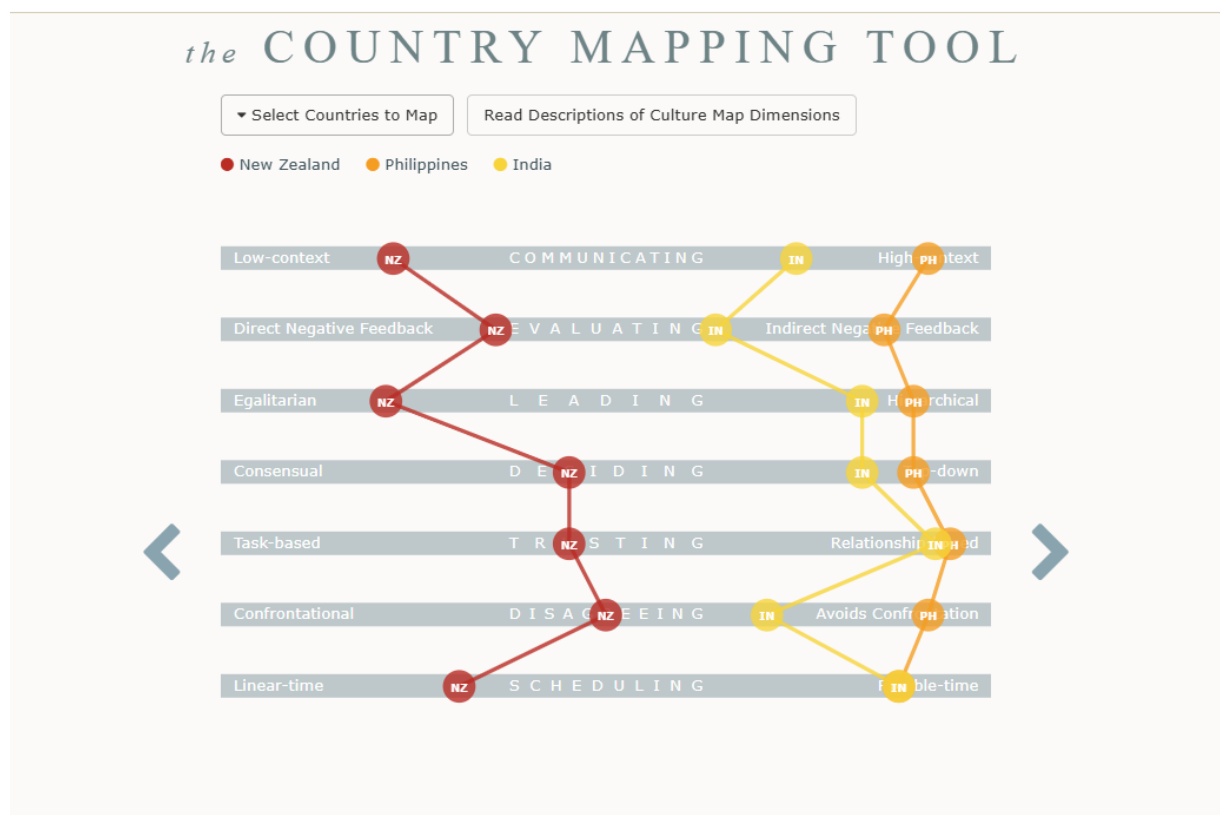


Figure 9 Mapping of New Zealand, India, and Philippines on the Culture Map (Meyer, 2014)

The distance between these points means New Zealand, the Philippines and India have fundamentally different cultural norms, which result in different “accepted” cultural behaviours.

Instead, the Philippines has high-context communication (where meaning is carried by what is implied and read between the lines rather than stated directly), hierarchical leadership, top-down decision-making, relationship-based trust, and an avoidance of confrontation. This is supported by Hofstede's scoring of the Philippines at 94 in power distance and 17 in individualism, placing it among the most hierarchical and collectivist cultures in the world. This is mapped in Table 2.

Table 2 What are the accepted cultural norms in New Zealand and The Philippines?

NZ Position	What does this mean?	Filipino Position	What does this mean?
Low context	Messages are stated explicitly and plainly.	High Context	Meaning is implied and read between the lines.
Direct negative feedback	Generally, criticism is delivered “frankly”.	Indirect negative feedback	Criticism is delivered softly, wrapped in positives and given in private.
Egalitarian	Flat structure, first names used, everyone is equal regardless of title or age.	Hierarchical	Clear distance between boss and worker. Status matters and communication follows set lines.
Consensual	Decisions involve group input.	Top down	Decisions are made by the boss.
Central, leans task-based	Trust is built through a combination of reliable work performance and developing a working relationship over time.	Relationship based.	Trust is built through personal connection over time.
Central, leans confrontational	Willingness to raise issues openly.	Avoids confrontation	Open disagreement is seen as damaging to the relationship.
Linear time	Sequential task completion, adherence to deadlines.	Flexible time.	Tasks adapt as opportunities arise, with flexibility valued over schedule.
Applications-first	Conclusions presented before theoretical reasoning.	N/A	N/A

By contrast, when displayed against the U.K, and Ireland, New Zealand maps significantly closer (Figure 10). That said, New Zealand remains more egalitarian and more transparent in communication and feedback.

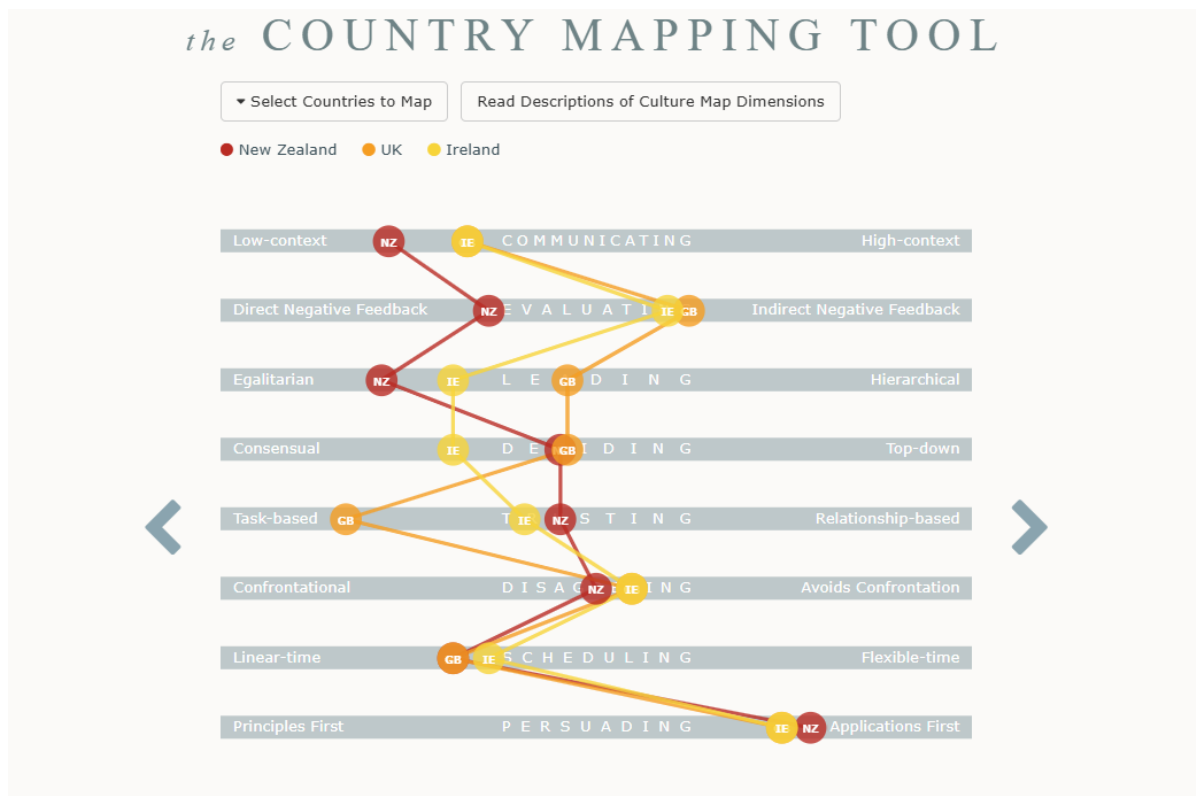


Figure 10 Mapping of New Zealand, Ireland and U.K.

Filipino Culture

There are several core values that underpin Filipino culture and which have been considered in Hofstede and Meyer's frameworks.

Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino's (2000) work is instrumental in offering insight into Sikolohiyang Pilipino, or Filipino psychology, from within Filipino culture itself, rather than interpreting Filipino behaviour through a colonial lens. It explores the behaviours, values and interpersonal dynamics that underpin Filipino world perspective and challenges Western interpretations of those values.

Core Values

At the core of Filipino social psychology is *Kapwa*. This is the concept of shared identity, where self and others are not separate. Surfacing from this core value are several other, more visible values, which shape Filipino behaviour, communication, hierarchy and response to conflict (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000):

- **Hiya** - sensitivity to shame, propriety, and avoiding embarrassment.
- **Amor propio** - self-esteem and sensitivity to personal dignity
- **Bahala na** - disposition of determination and courage to take on a task with confidence that it can be worked out, rather than retreating in the face of uncertainty
- **Pakikisama** - smooth social relations; which can include going along with the group
- **Utang na loob** - reciprocity; debt of gratitude

What Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino's (2000) work does not consider, however, is how these values are shaped in different contexts; such as migrants who reside in New Zealand and work in the dairy industry.

3.12 Managing Multicultural Teams

There is a growing base of literature on multicultural teams, though none apply in the dairy context.

Brett et al. (2006)'s research into managing multicultural teams offered two main insights. The first is that successful teams and managers managed multicultural challenges in four ways;

- by adapting (acknowledging the cultural gaps and adapting to them)
- by structural intervention (shaping the makeup of the team)
- managerial intervention (setting the cultural norm of the team early)
- removing a non-aligning team member.

They also found that barriers to a team's success included:

- direct versus indirect communication
- accents and fluency
- differing attitudes toward hierarchy and authority
- conflicting norms for decision making.

Communication difficulties have been repeatedly corroborated in later work (Hinds et al., 2014).

When Multicultural Teams Split

The "Faultline Theory", proposed by Lau & Murnighan (1998), explains how a diverse team can split into smaller sub-groups, generating more sub-group conflict. The "faultline" occurs where certain similarities, such as ethnicity, common language, or age, line up and creating an "us and them" mentality. Hinds et al. (2014) builds on this by finding that language differences only cause faultlines where there is also a struggle over power or status.

However, Bezrukova et al. (2009) argue that faultlines are highly context-dependent and might be beneficial where strong team identification is present and can instead enhance performance. Importantly, though, this performance depended on the type of faultline: divisions based on knowledge and expertise (information-based) tended to improve performance, whereas those based on social identity such as ethnicity or nationality (social-category) tended to harm it (Bezrukova et al., 2009).

3.13 Cultural Intelligence

In a multicultural team, elements of cultural intelligence (CQ) may be present. Earley and Ang (2003) define cultural intelligence as the capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. It is commonly broken into four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural, as shown in Figure 11.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Framework

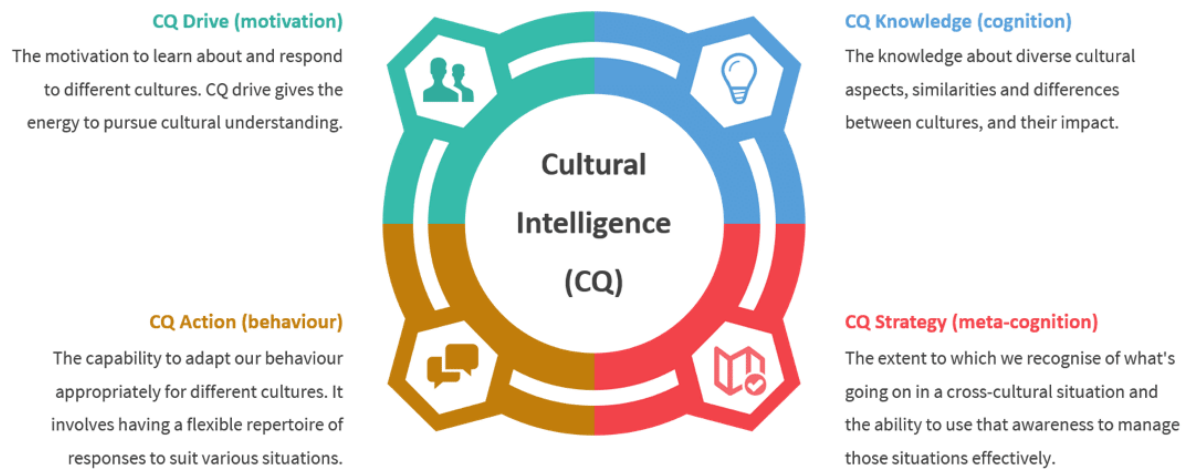


Figure 11 The Four Dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (Gumulya, 2020 adapted from Livermore, 2011).

Motivational CQ is the motivation to engage with and learn about other cultures. It looks like:

"I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me and I'm confident I can socialise with locals in a culture that's unfamiliar to me".

Cognitive cultural intelligence is what an individual knows about cultural similarities, differences, and how cultures work. An example of Cognitive CQ may include:

"I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures".

Metacognitive cultural intelligence is an awareness of what's happening in a cross-cultural situation and using that awareness to adjust behaviours. Someone with Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence CQ may align with this statement:

"I am conscious of or adjust the knowledge I use when I interact with people of different cultural backgrounds".

Behavioural CQ is where individuals adapt their behaviour, verbal and non-verbal, to suit the situation. This could include:

"I change my verbal behaviour, such as my accent and tone, when a cross-cultural interaction requires it."

"I use pauses and silences differently to suit different situations."

"I change my non-verbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires."

(Van Dyne et al., 2008)

Motivational CQ is the most consistent predictor of cross-cultural adjustment. If someone is motivated to engage and learn about another culture, they are more likely to integrate better into the host society (Lei et al., 2025).

Whilst literature has namely assessed CQ against individuals, such as either an employee or a manager, Presbitero et al. (2025) introduces the concept of "double CQ"; whereby both

employee and manager in multicultural work groups have cultural intelligence (CQ). They argue that “double CQ” encourages a shift from viewing cultural diversity as a challenge, to viewing it as a strength and that the effective management can lead to improved interpersonal dynamics, increased employee engagement, and reduced turnover rates.

There is no literature considering the dairy industry and CQ; apart from one. In 2021, Fowles recommended improving dairy employers' cultural intelligence by encouraging them to learn about the cultural personalities of their workers. There has been no further work undertaken in this space since.

3.14 Cultural Broker

An individual with strong cultural intelligence may play a role in their multicultural team as a cultural broker. Jang (2017) presents the concept of the “Cultural Broker” - someone who facilitates interactions between those who sit across cultural boundaries. They act as a “bridge” from one culture to another. Here, an individual's cultural background overlaps with other team members, and they use their integration between cultures to combine and share knowledge. Jang identifies a second cultural broker – those whose cultural background has no overlap with any other team members but can broker by eliciting knowledge from individuals from different cultures.

3.15 Language

Tenzer et al. (2014) suggests that language and culture are intertwined, however argues that language can influence relationships differently than cultural differences.

They suggest that in multicultural teams that don't share the same first language fluently, two reactions happen; emotional reactions and cognitive thinking reactions. Both reactions change how trustworthy people perceive each other to be, undermining trust within a team.

Emotional Reaction

The first implication is the emotional reaction of speaking in a second language. This creates feelings of anxiety, frustration, fear of looking incompetent, and sometimes resentment towards native speakers. This is supported by Neeley (2013), who found that whilst non-native speakers shared a common attitude of resentment and distrust toward their native English-speaking coworkers, how they behaved towards them (spoke up anyway, retreated or channelled it into learning) differed depending on their perceived proficiency in English.

Dotan-Eliaz et al., (2009)'s study on linguistic ostracism also resulted in feelings of rejection and anger, less attraction to their co-workers, and lower perceived team potency. Here, they defined linguistic ostracism as a situation where part of a group are conversing in a language that others can't understand.

Interestingly, however, individuals with high social self-efficacy, which is a person's belief in their own ability to handle social situations, performed better when linguistically ostracised. This aligns with Schmitz and Schmitz (2022)'s argument that more extraverted individuals integrated easier and were more proactive in learning the language of the country. Paired with Earley and Ang (2003)'s concept of motivational CQ, which is the motivation to engage with and learn about other cultures, it seems that those with certain characteristics may integrate better into new cultures.

Cognitive Thinking Reaction

The second reaction Tenzer et al. (2014) identified was cognitive thinking reaction. When an individual is not able to explain themselves in a second language, others may interpret that as a sign of lower competence, intelligence, or commitment. This is despite the person being highly capable in their own language. Neeley (2013) reported this as status loss, whereby non-native English speakers felt a loss of status regardless of how fluent they were when speaking to native speakers.

Supporting non-native speakers in a multicultural team

Whilst applicable to the dairy industry, there is no literature available on supporting non-native speakers in multicultural teams. The following therefore needs to be considered as useful, but unproven in academic literature in the context of dairy.

Closed Loop Communication

Widely used in the medical industry, closed-loop communication, whereby the listener repeats an instruction back in their own words and the speaker confirms it's correct, has been proven to help ensure messages are accurately understood (Brown, 2004). This is a useful technique for interpersonal communication.

Pairing fluent and less-fluent speakers

Pairing fluent and less-fluent speakers, so they can share language, helps build connection across the team. Al-Naemi et al. (2025) revealed the existence and prevalence of an informal language advice network (LAN) where individuals with varying levels of English proficiency actively engage in voluntary language-related knowledge-seeking and sharing.

Creating Safe Environments

Neeley et al. (2012) emphasise the importance of creating a safe communication environment, so that non-native speakers can speak or practice speaking English. In their study, employees expressed fears about the stigma associated with admitting they had difficulty with speaking English. This made it difficult for them to seek support. Neeley et al. (2012) suggests managers should actively support language training for employees who would like to improve their ability to speak in English, but most importantly, be empathetic and encourage empathy within teams.

Use of Technology

Technology is increasingly used to support communication in multicultural teams, including using WhatsApp, translation applications, and using visual aids such as photos and diagrams (Bates, 2021). Whilst using technology offers immediate relief to language pressures and can enable operational success, trust is built on personal connection; tone, body language, and the feeling of being understood in the moment (Tenzer et al., 2014). Therefore technology can offer an operational bridge within multicultural teams but will not build personal connection – which is what enables a good team to thrive.

3.16 High Performing Teams in Dairy – What makes a good team?

Early efforts to strengthen dairy teams have predominantly been structural. A 2021 employer survey found that most dairy operations responded to staff shortages with structural changes, including raising wages, investing in training, reducing hours, and improving rosters (DairyNZ, 2022). Crouch (2021) similarly recommended flexible rosters but argued that structural levers

like this must be paired with leadership, safe workplace cultures, and a shared sense of purpose. This emphasises an important point; structural foundations are necessary but not sufficient alone for a high performing team.

A high-performing team also rests on a culture that supports autonomy and innovation, providing workers with the confidence to contribute. Recent DairyNZ research reinforces this, finding that workplace productivity is multidimensional and that team engagement and satisfaction are core drivers of high performance, wellbeing and retention (DairyNZ, 2026).

While these foundations define what a high-performing team looks like, the literature consistently emphasises that leadership underpins them - making the quality of the leader inseparable from the quality of the team.

What Makes a Good Dairy Leader?

DairyNZ (2024c) identifies leadership as central to team performance, distinguishing leadership, or "doing the right things", from management, "doing things right". They note that most New Zealand operations require both.

Guidance emphasises that inspiring a shared vision and distributing leadership across the team reduces the leader's workload while raising others' motivation and satisfaction (DairyNZ, 2024c). These principles underpin the "Good Boss" initiative, which highlighted clear communication, listening and feedback, fair wages, flexibility, and treating staff as the farm's greatest asset (Rural News Group, 2020).

3.17 Research Gap

Literature acknowledges the necessity of migrants in the South Island to fill labour shortages (Kyte, 2007; Tipples et al., 2010; DairyNZ, 2021; DairyNZ, 2024). Yet, whilst there have been studies on the migrant experience in Canterbury's dairy industry (Kambuta et al., 2024) and what it means to be a "good migrant" (Collins and Bayliss, 2020), there is no literature on what it means to be in, or lead, a multicultural team in Canterbury's dairy industry.

A second observation is that all recommendations on building a good team, or being a good leader, make no mention of a multicultural team – which may suggest current advice is based on monocultural teams in line with the ethnocentric-ness of human nature. This project seeks to explore these areas in greater detail.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This research used a sequential, mixed methods design to understand the cultural diversity of Canterbury's dairy workforce. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) suggest that combining both quantitative and qualitative data enables a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than neither approach could achieve alone.

- **Phase 1** - Quantitative secondary census data drawn from Stats NZ across 2013, 2018 and 2023 was analysed to understand the ethnic composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce. The analysis of these findings influenced the selection of those interviewed in the second phase.
- **Phase 2** - Qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken to explore the lived experiences of those working in multicultural, or monocultural migrant teams.

The nature of the research was exploratory and explanatory – investigating an area not yet explored and seeking explanations for the patterns and themes that emerge.

Finally, the research sought to translate both the literature and the findings into practical recommendations for farmers and industry.

4.2 Census Data

To understand trends in the composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce, census data was requested from Stats New Zealand for 2013, 2018 and 2023. These were filtered by two ANZCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) occupation codes - Dairy Cattle Farmer (121313) and Dairy Cattle Farm Worker (841512) and broken down by ethnicity at Level 3, birthplace, age, gender, and geographic region.

What is ethnicity?

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups a person identifies with or has a sense of belonging to. Nationality is where they hold citizenship. For example, a person may identify ethnically as Filipino while holding New Zealand citizenship (Stats NZ, 2021).

Level 3 Ethnic Data

This research used census ethnicity data from Stats NZ, which is based on self-identification, as opposed to "Birthplace" data. While the two datasets intersect, and migration and immigration trends were also considered, ethnicity data was selected as the primary measure because the research is principally concerned with cultural diversity.

Level 3 ethnicity data is the most granular data Stats NZ collects. Requesting Level 1 ethnicity data, such as European, Māori, Asian, is in line with current national statistics and reporting, would not have enabled differentiation between specific nationalities or ethnic groups with distinct cultures and worldviews.

Limitations of census data

Whilst census data allows workforce trends to be tracked across time periods, and the data quality was considered "high" in 2023, it has its limitations (Stats NZ, n.d.).

Changing census data collection and data quality

The way in which census data is collected has changed from 2013, 2018 and 2023. 2013 was self-completed only, whilst a combined model was introduced in 2018 and fully integrated by 2023. This reduces the comparability of 2018 and 2023 figures with 2013 figures (Stats NZ, n.d.).

Self-Completed

The census is primarily self-completed and has the potential to generate errors in completion.

Not fully representative of temporary workers

Census data does not fully represent New Zealand's dairy workforce over a five-year period, given it only captures those living in Canterbury on the census date (Tipples et al., 2010). Those who have joined the dairy industry and left within that time, such as those on temporary visas, are not captured.

Limitations of ANZCO definitions

Despite analysing the relationship between ethnicity and occupation, Stats NZ's collapsing of roles into two broad categories resulted in few insights being gleaned without significant assumptions being made. Whilst they later expanded these to three categories in 2021, this was not provided in the census data received and would still have limited analysis.

Table 3 ANZCO definitions of roles in dairy farming (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Dairy Cattle Farm Worker (841512)	Dairy Cattle Farmer (121313)
<i>"Performs routine tasks on a dairy farm such as herding and milking cattle".</i>	<i>"Plans, organises, controls, coordinates and performs farming operations to breed and raise dairy cattle for milk, meat and breeding stock".</i>
	*The definition cites share milkers and "Dairy Herd Manager (ANZSCO Skill Level 3)".

As shown in Table 3, the ANZCO definitions for "worker" and "farmer" do not map clearly to the roles that exist on farm. There are many roles in the dairy industry, broadly categorised as farm assistants, herd managers, 2ICs, contract milkers, sharemilkers to farm owners, each with distinct responsibilities and skills.

A reasonable assumption could be made that farm assistants fall within the 'Dairy Cattle Farm Worker' category, whilst all other roles fall within the 'Dairy Cattle Farmer' category. This, however, unhelpfully forces roles from herd manager to farm owner into one category and makes it impossible to track ethnic representation at each level of the industry. This is therefore not explored further in this report.

Cleaning and Filtering Data

Raw census files were received from Stats NZ and were filtered to only retain essential information, such as ethnicity labels, "dairy workers" and "dairy farmers" in the Canterbury region, age and gender variables. Excel pivot tables were used to summarise and analyse data, with additional cleaning of unnecessary data undertaken. Further details of this process can be found in Appendix 2.

Focusing on key ethnic groups

Once trends were observed between 2013 – 2023, ethnicities occupying the highest composition were sought out to interview for the semi-structured interviews.

4.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection method to gather rich data around Canterbury's dairy workforce. This type of interview suited the nature of the research, as its flexible questioning style enabled exploration of themes as they arose (Kircher & Zipp, 2022). A copy of interview questions can be found in Appendix 3. The project had approval from the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee prior to interviews taking place.

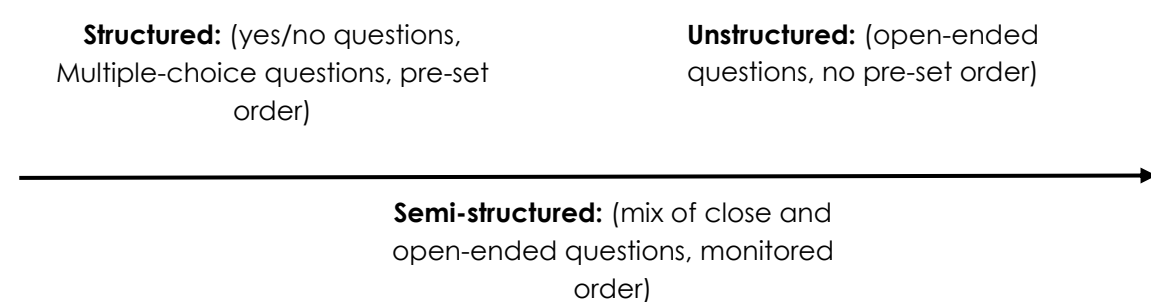


Figure 12 Spectrum of interview question types; structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Kircher & Zipp, 2022)

Grounded Theory

This research set out to establish Canterbury dairy-specific understanding, grounded in the data gathered through interviews. Here, the literature review was deliberately undertaken following the analysis of qualitative data to strengthen the integrity of any theories found. This approach reduces preconception bias and allows the data itself to generate theory, rather than testing what is already established. This is called “Grounded Theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Both the findings and literature were then cross-referenced to translate practical recommendations for farmers and industry.

Information Leaflet

An information poster was created to engage with and inform participants, as shown in (Appendix 4). This detailed the aims of the research questions and expectations of the interview.

Two rounds of interviews took place with interviewees found via:

1. The snowball sample method
2. Use of social media

Snowball sampling is a method whereby initial participants are recruited through existing networks and those participants recommend others who would suit the research criteria (Goodman, 1961).

Participants were then invited to partake in interviews through the sharing of the information leaflet on social media. This primarily invited Filipino participants to take part in the study, as the first round of interviews had only yielded 1 response. Interestingly, whilst Filipino participants came forward, so too did several South American respondents and one additional British participant.

All interviews were conducted in English. It is acknowledged that this excluded workers with lower English proficiency, and that their perspectives are therefore not captured in the findings.

Why semi-structured interviews?

Whilst a survey was considered, it's limiting nature would not have aligned with the exploratory and explanatory nature of this part of the research – to identify what is happening within Canterbury's dairy workforce and why.

Using focus groups of specific ethnicities, a multicultural group or farm team case studies were also considered. This approach was decided against, given the differing power dynamics within some groups and the likelihood of eliciting more in-depth responses from one-to-one interviews with participants.

Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent by signing a participation form. A copy of this is found in Appendix 5. This was also read to the participants prior to the interview beginning, with their anonymity, confidentiality and their rights to withdraw from the study highlighted.

Positionality

Positionality is integral to the process of qualitative research - as is the researcher's awareness of their own position and how others position them. This positionality can impact all aspects of the research process (Holmes, 2020).

It is acknowledged that the participants of this study hold many world views and perspectives, with the researcher only holding one of those. This was considered during all stages of engaging with participants; developing interview questions, speaking to participants, and analysing responses.

The following guidelines were used throughout to challenge this perspective and encourage diversity of thought:

- Is this being framed as “good or bad” in the New Zealand-accepted context, or a “cultural difference”?
- Using participant's own words where possible
- Consideration towards how a researcher of another culture would consider the explanation of cultural differences
- In-person “member checking” with participants to clarify statements during interviews

Member Checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe member checking as a crucial technique for establishing credibility in interviews. This is because it provides the opportunity for participants to correct or challenge interpreter misinterpretations, as well as allowing participants to volunteer additional information. That said, some of the participants spoken to may not have

corrected a misunderstanding due to differing cultural values – such as to protect *hiya* in Filipino culture.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is the method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data, organising and describing data in rich detail (Braun and Clark, 2006).

Interviews were recorded and transcribed using the tool, *Otter*. Transcriptions were uploaded to the thematic analysis tool *Delve* for coding and the clustering of themes. Naeem *et al.* (2023)'s methodology was followed through to the concepts stage (Figure 13).

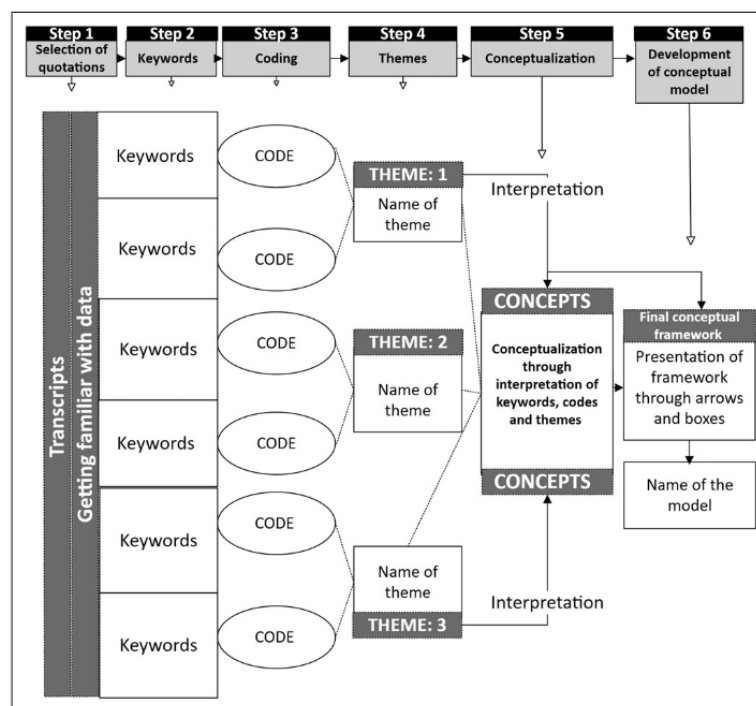


Figure 13 Naeem *et al.* (2023)'s Thematic Analysis Model

4.4 Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence was used throughout this project. Clear instructions were set throughout, requiring all sources to be verified and validated, prohibiting fabrication and confining the tool to reflective reasoning. All analysis of census data, interview transcripts and theme identification took place manually, without the use of AI tools.

5. Participant Profile

The ethnicities of the participants interviewed are shown in Figure 14.

32 people were interviewed, influenced primarily by the six ethnic groups identified in the census data analysis (New Zealand European, Filipino, Māori, British, Indian and Latin American). Where participants from other ethnicities volunteered to participate, these were also included in the interviews.

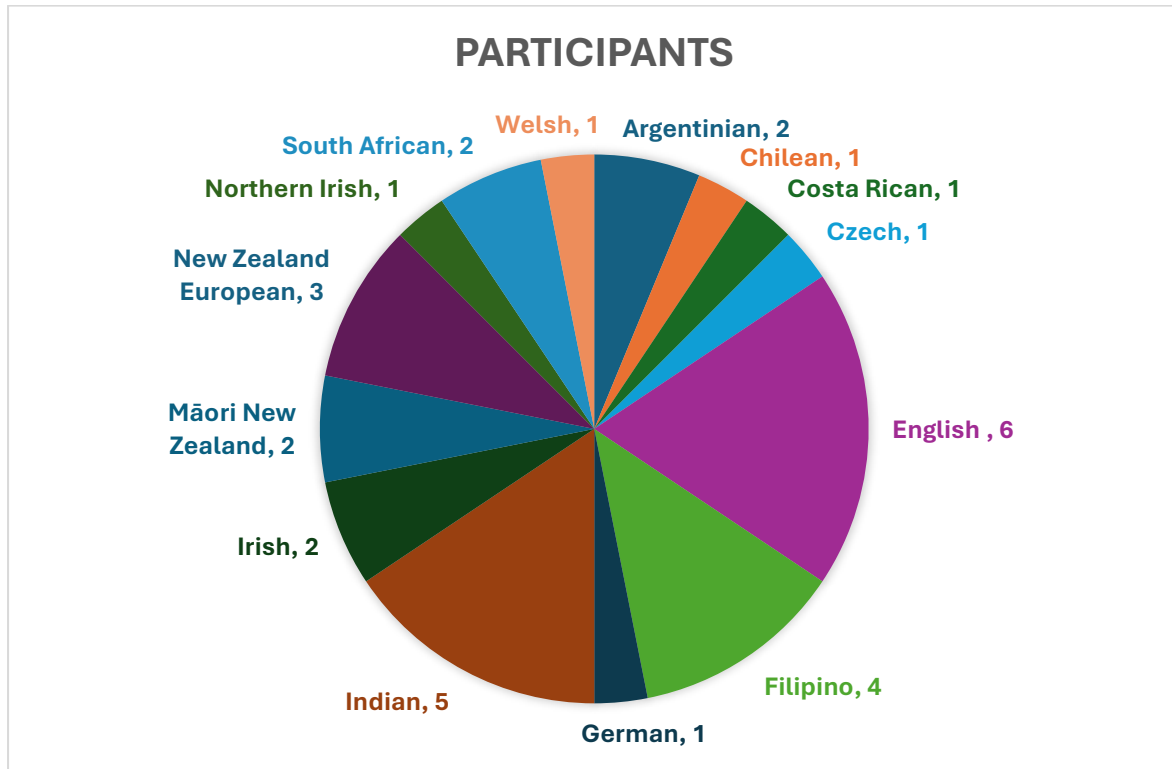


Figure 14 Participant Profile - Ethnicity

Due to the snowball technique used in recruiting participants, the timeframes in which they were recruited and considering those who responded to the advert for more participants, there was a larger than representative number of British and Irish participants.

A representative sample of all roles in the dairy industry was sought out (Figure 15).

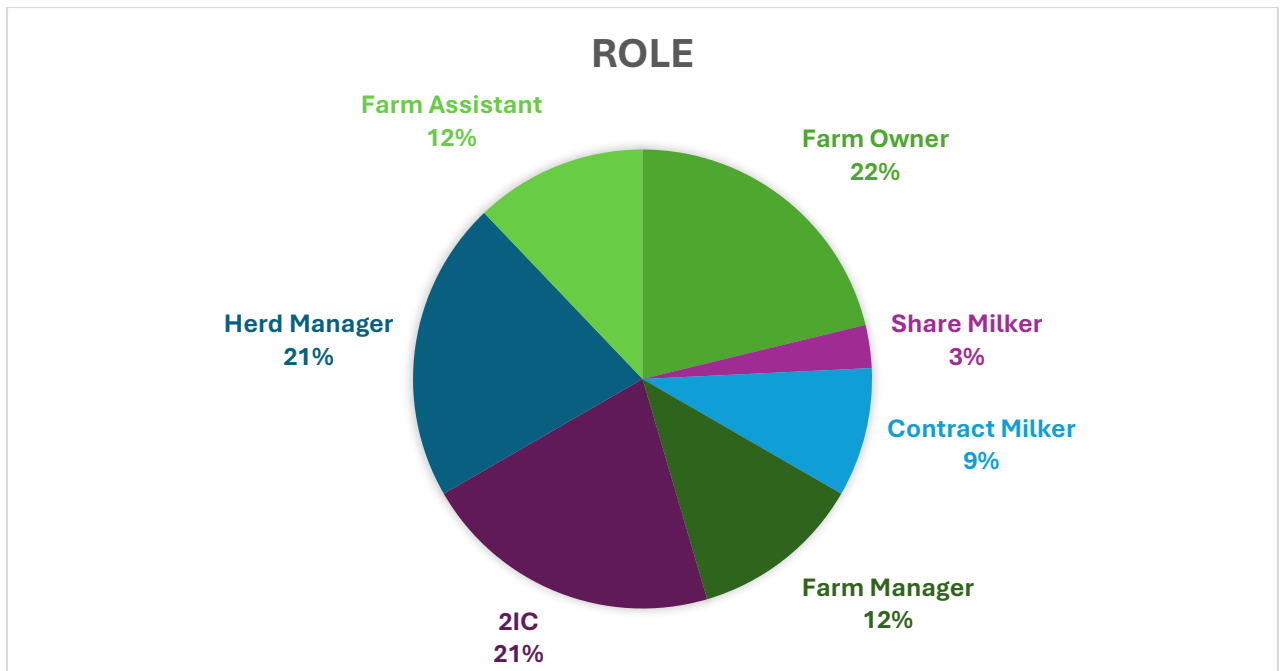


Figure 15 Role of Participants

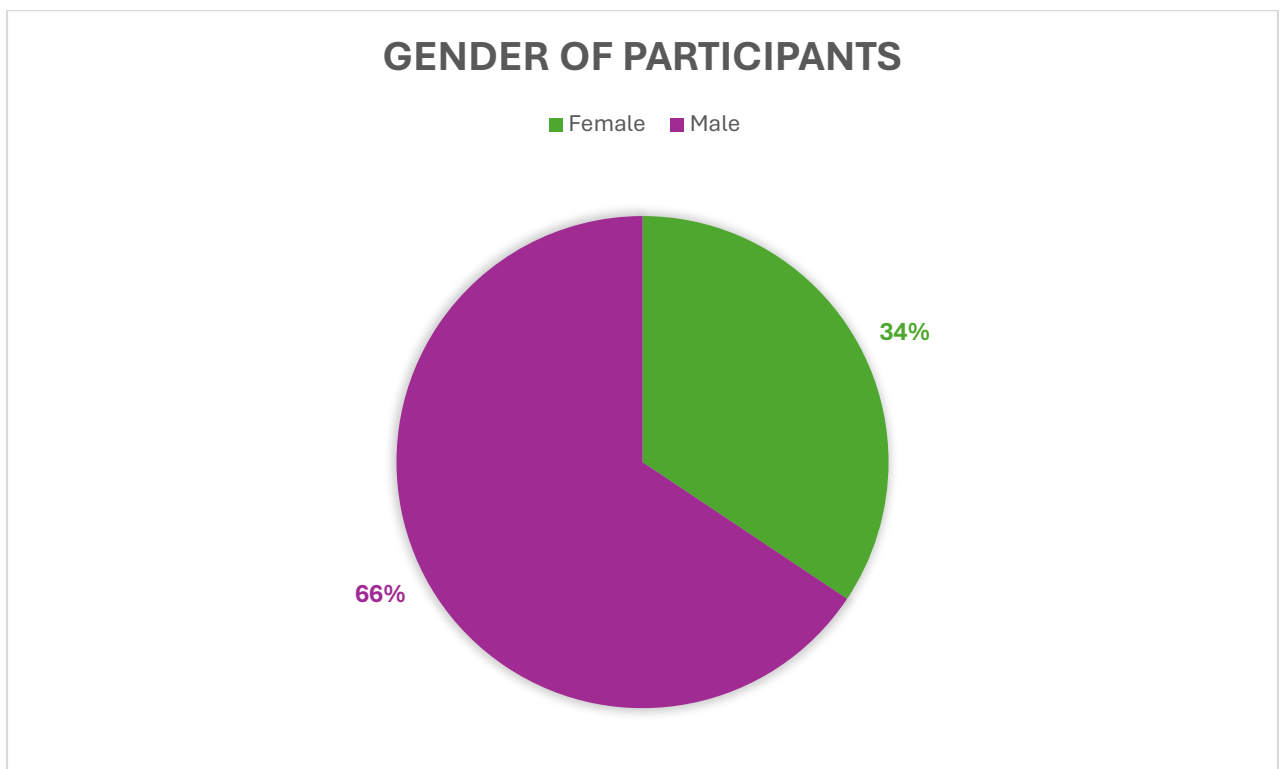


Figure 16 Gender of Participants

Figure 16 displays the gender breakdown of the participants. This breakdown aligns with DairyNZ (2022)'s findings in 2022 that 36% of people in dairy are women, and 64% men.

Further demographic details on participants can be found in Appendix 6.

6. Ethnic Composition of Canterbury's Dairy Workforce

What is the ethnic composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce?

The results in this section are primarily derived from analysis of census data (2013 – 2023).

6.1 National Comparison

In a comparison of 2023 Canterbury-specific census data and DairyNZ's 2022 national workforce survey, Figure 17 shows that Canterbury has a higher Asian presence (24% vs 19%), double the MELAA representation (4% vs 2%), and Māori (7% vs 16%) at less than half the national rate. There is a higher European %, though this does not distinguish between NZ European, Australian or European.

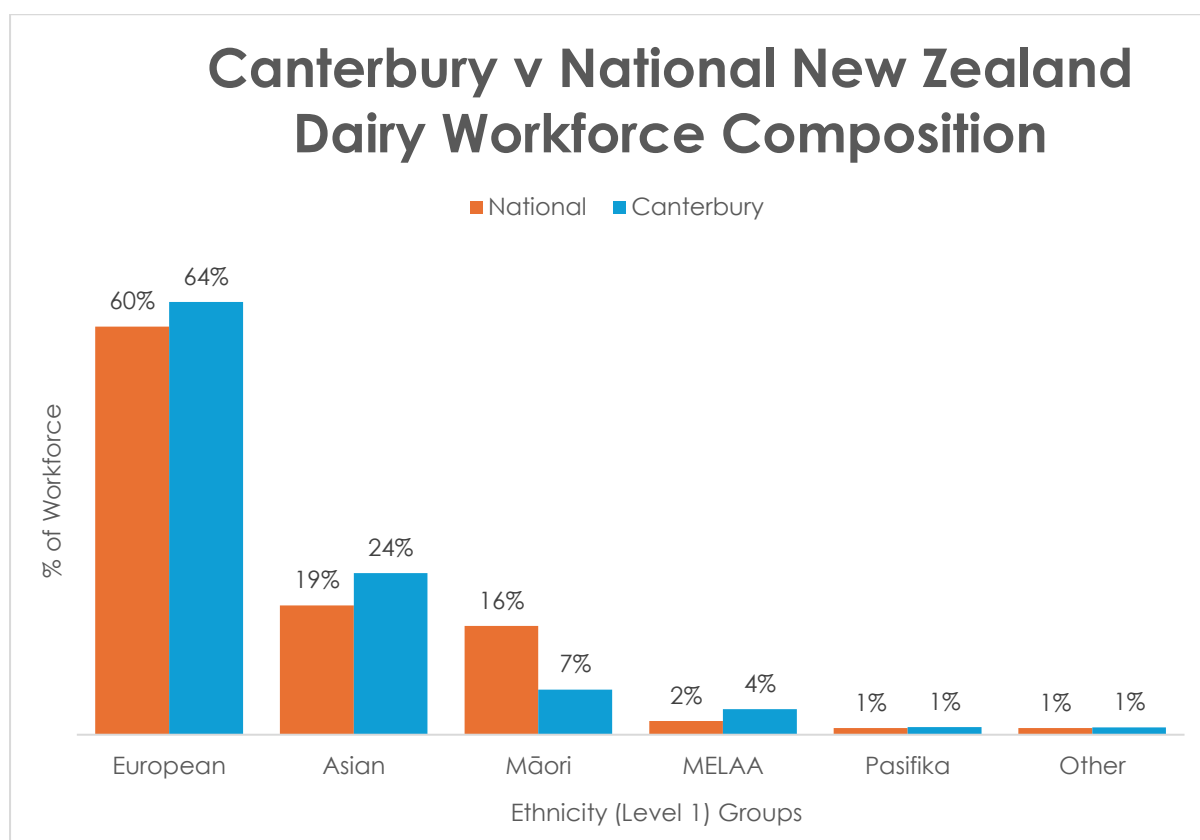


Figure 17 Comparison of Canterbury Census Data (Ethnicity Level 1) 2023 & DairyNZ National Data 2022

Comparing these data sources and not being able to distinguish between ethnic groups within each category offers limited insight. Therefore, analysis of ethnic groups using the most detailed ethnicity census data was undertaken to provide a more granular picture.

Figure 18 shows the regional dairy workforce compared between Māori and New Zealand European (New Zealand) and 'Other Ethnicities' (all other non-New Zealand ethnicities) working in the industry in 2023.

Two clear regional groupings emerge from the analysis.

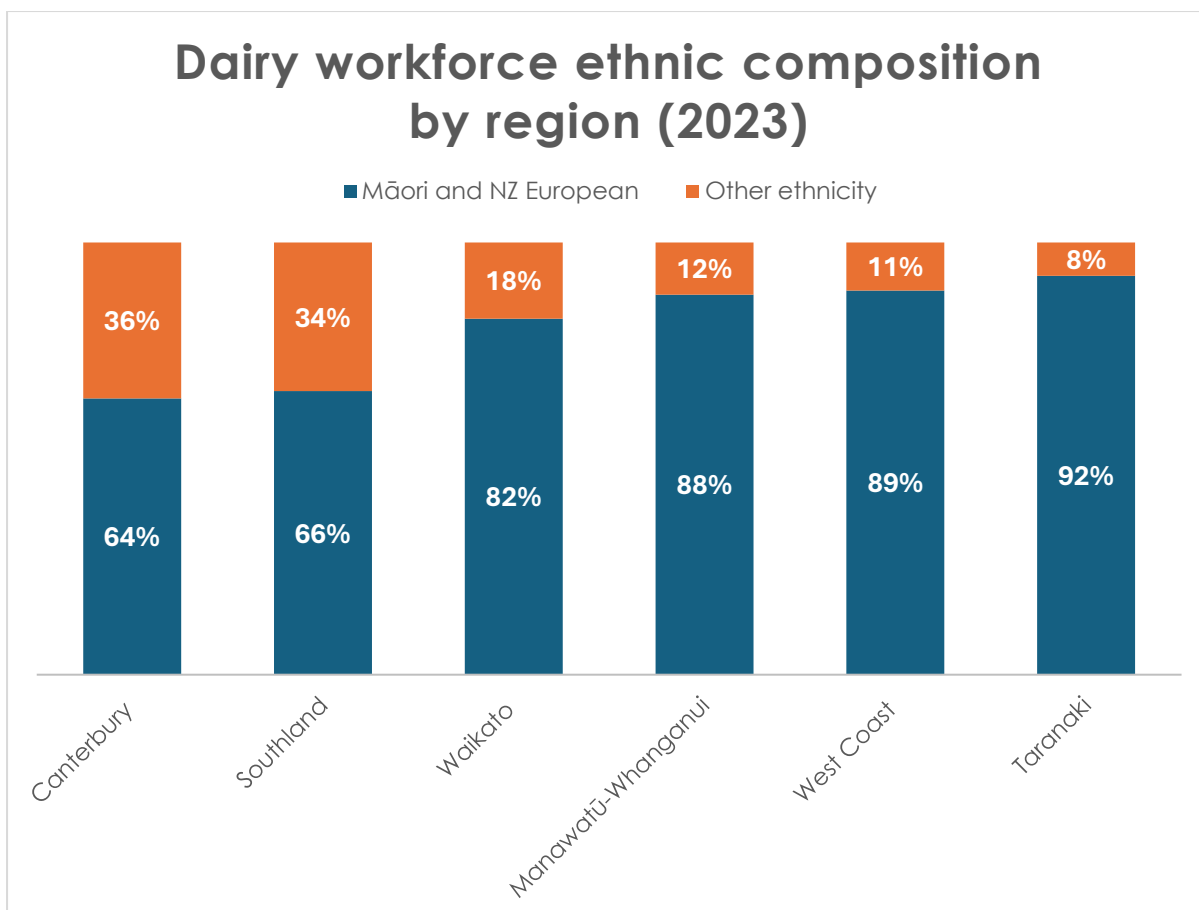


Figure 18 Dairy Workforce Ethnic Composition by Region – compared between Māori and New Zealand European (New Zealand) and Other Ethnicities

Strikingly, of the major dairy regions in New Zealand, Canterbury and Southland have over a third of their workforce made up of another ethnicity. They have the lowest percentage of New Zealanders (64% - Canterbury, 66% - Southland) and the highest percentage of those of “Other Ethnicities” working in their regional dairy industries (36% - Canterbury, 34% Southland). This is significantly lower than national statistics, where 76% of the workforce was a New Zealander in 2023 (DairyNZ and NZ Statistics).

DairyNZ (2022) notes that Canterbury and Southland are the most recently converted dairy regions, with larger average farm sizes and a higher proportion of employees on farm (75–80%). These structural features align closely with the regions' ethnic composition: the areas with the largest farms and the highest reliance on employed labour are also those with the most ethnically diverse workforces. This points to a structural relationship between farm scale, the owner-to-employee ratio, and the cultural makeup of the regional workforce.

Given that dairy accounts for one in ten jobs across Selwyn, Ashburton, and Timaru districts (DairyNZ, 2026) and one in three dairy workers in Canterbury is a non-New Zealand ethnicity, cultural diversity is now a defining characteristic of the workforce in these areas.

Contrastingly, for the Waikato, Manawatu-Whanganui Region, West Coast and Taranaki, New Zealand ethnicities form a significantly higher percentage of the workforce. The Waikato sits in the middle of this, with 82% New Zealanders. Taranaki sits at the end of the scale at 92%.

Māori and New Zealand European Composition Breakdown

Table 4 details the breakdown of Māori and New Zealand (NZ) European dairy workers. NZ European is the dominant ethnicity across all six regions, but ranges from 83.19% in Taranaki to 57.27% in Canterbury.

Table 4 Māori and New Zealand European Composition

	Canterbury	Manawatū-Whanganui	Southland	Taranaki	Waikato	West Coast
New Zealand European	57.27%	74.81%	58.46%	83.19%	70.22%	77.25%
Māori	6.63%	13.10%	7.15%	9.08%	12.13%	11.63%

Māori representation follows a different pattern. Manawatū-Whanganui has the strongest presence at 13.10%, followed by Waikato at 12.13% and West Coast at 11.63%. Canterbury and Southland, despite being the most ethnically diverse overall, have the lowest Māori representation at 6.63% and 7.15%. This suggests the diversity of their workforce has been driven by international migration rather than domestic Māori participation.

“Other Ethnicity” Breakdown

When considering the breakdown of those of another ethnicity across regions, it is clear there is no single national pattern; diversity in dairy looks fundamentally different depending on region.

The Waikato has the greatest spread of ethnic groups (25), for example, but a smaller population of each group than Canterbury. Southland has a greater Filipino population (18.4%) and Dutch (2.06%) population than Canterbury, but a smaller Indian (2.63%) and Latin American community (1.63%). The West Coast and Taranaki are the least diverse by range, with nine and seven ethnic groups respectively, and have the smallest % composition of non-New Zealand ethnicities. A detailed breakdown of this can be found in Appendix 7.

6.2 Who is in Canterbury's Dairy Workforce?

The 2023 census data identified a total of 23 ethnic groups in Canterbury's dairy industry, with 14 of those with representation above 0.5%. This is shown in Figure 19.

From largest to smallest composition, these include New Zealand European, Filipino, Māori, Latin American, Indian, British and Irish, Other European, Other Asian, Asian nfd, Other Ethnicity, Sri Lankan, Dutch, Southeast Asian nfd, and Fijian. A further 9 ethnic groups making up less than 0.5% were included in “Other”.

“Nfd” means “not further defined” – the respondent selected Asian, for example, but didn't specify within that group.

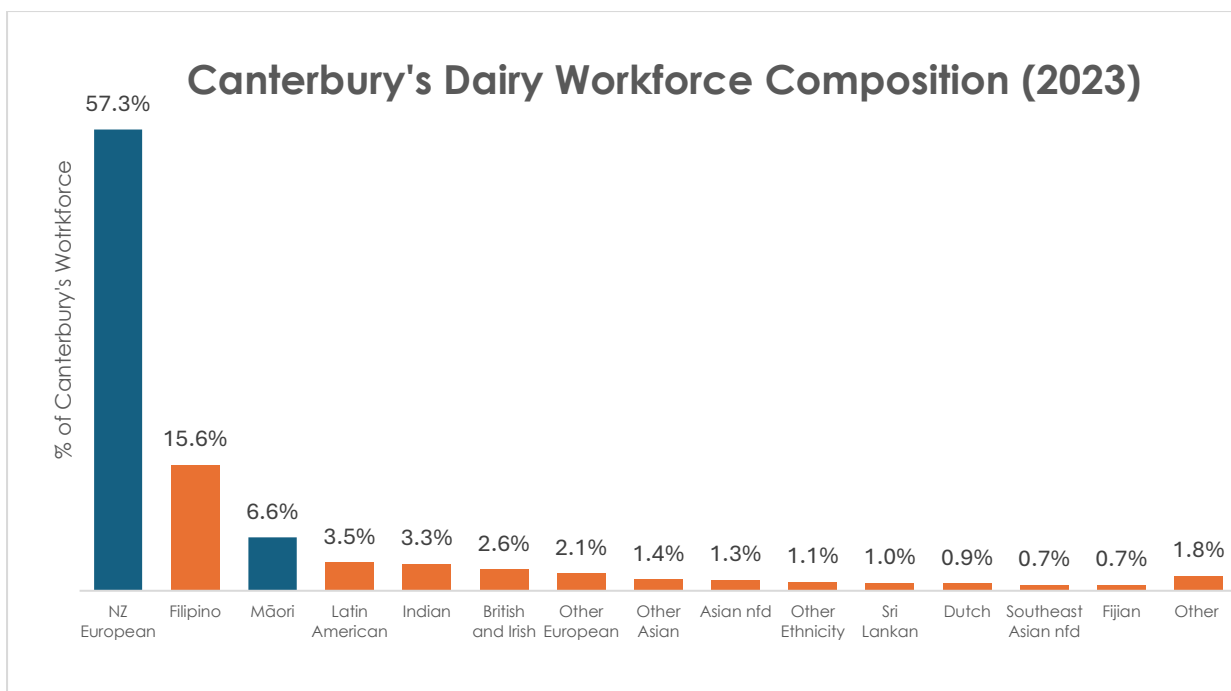


Figure 19 Canterbury's Dairy Workforce Composition (2023)

Whilst there are 23 ethnic groups making up Canterbury's dairy workforce, these groups are not evenly distributed. NZ European still dominates at 57.3% but is followed by a large Filipino population (15.6%) and Māori at third at 6.6%. A middle tier of Latin American (3.5%), Indian (3.3%), and British and Irish (2.6%) cluster between 2-4% of the workforce, whilst the remaining 17 groups each represent less than 2% of the workforce.

The most dominant "other ethnicity" in Canterbury's dairy workforce are Filipinos (15.6%). This is a stark contrast from the 16 Filipino workers recorded working in dairy in 2003-2004 (Tipples et al., 2012). The Filipino composition is nearly four times larger than the next closest ethnic groups, which includes Latin Americans (3.5%), Indians (3.3%), British and Irish (2.5%). From there are several smaller, but present, ethnic groups.

How has the composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce changed between 2013 – 2023?

The composition of Canterbury's workforce was assessed between 2013 – 2023. By looking at a 10-year span, we can start to observe trends as to when certain ethnic groups began to increase or decline.

Given 57% of Canterbury farms reported being understaffed in 2021, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (DairyNZ, 2022), this analysis also provides insight into changes driven by immigration policy, and who arrived from where to fill the labour gap. However, given the Census only took place one year after the survey (2023), the full impact of this may not be seen until the 2028 Census results.

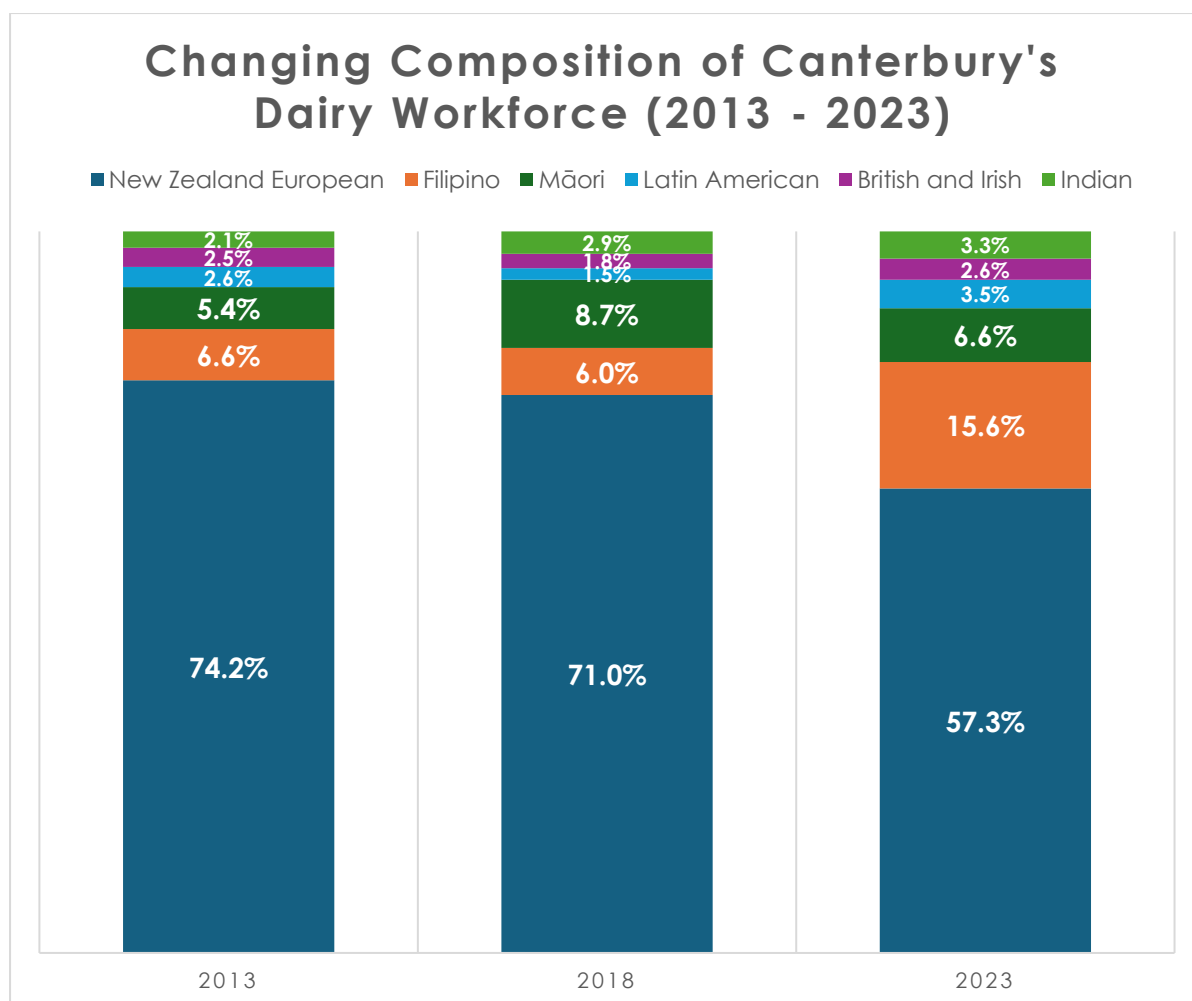


Figure 20 2013 - 2023 Canterbury dairy workforce – percentage point change

As shown in Figure 20, by 2023, NZ European representation had declined by 17 percentage points from 74.2% to 57.3%, with much of this decline concentrated in the 2018 - 2023 period. During this time, 20 other ethnic groups* increased to fill this gap.

Table 5 shows there was a stable population of Filipino between 2013 and 2018, which rapidly increased from 6.0% in 2018 to 15.6% in 2023. This makes it the fastest-growing ethnic group in Canterbury's dairy workforce.

Table 5 Changing composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce

	2013	2018	2023	% change
New Zealand European	74.20%	70.98%	57.27%	-16.93%
Filipino	6.63%	6.01%	15.58%	+8.96%
Māori	5.42%	8.66%	6.63%	+1.21%
Latin American	2.64%	1.46%	3.50%	+0.86%
British and Irish	2.50%	1.82%	2.62%	+0.12%
Indian	2.09%	2.86%	3.35%	+1.26%

*Whilst not displayed, 15 other increased. Other European, Other Asian, Asian nfd, Sri Lankan, Dutch, Southeast Asian nfd, Fijian, Australian, African, Chinese, Cook Islands Māori, Other Southeast Asian, Tongan, German, and Samoan.

Māori representation increased by 1.2% over the assessed period, peaking at 8.7% in 2018. This is consistent with Figure 5, whereby nationally, Māori dairy workforce composition has remained consistent (DairyNZ, NZ Statistics).

Latin American and Indian groups recorded modest growth across the decade, while British and Irish representation remained stable at approximately 2.6%.

6.3 Looking ahead

While this section reports on the workforce as it is now, the interviews surfaced observations about what Canterbury might see in the coming years - or may already have begun to see since 2023.

The most notable included a slowing of the migration of Filipino in Canterbury's dairy industry and a rise in the Indian workforce. Several participants observed the Indian composition of the workforce in particular moving into more senior roles and pursuing progression toward self-employment and ownership, whilst Filipino composition remained largely as herd managers, farm assistants, and occasionally contract milkers. As an emerging pattern rather than something visible in the census data, this is explored in the Discussion.

6.4 Summary

With the largest proportion of non-New Zealand ethnicities (36%) and the second largest spread of ethnic groups (23) in New Zealand, Canterbury has a structurally different composition of its workforce than most other dairy regions.

But the 36% who migrated to Canterbury's dairy industry – how did they get here and why did they come? This is explored in Part 2.

7. Pathway to Dairy and Motivators

How did Canterbury's dairy workforce get here and why?

The results from here onwards are from interviews undertaken.

7.1 Pathway to Dairy

How did they access the industry?

Interesting observations arose from enquiries into participant's backgrounds. Pathways to entry are shown in Figure 21.

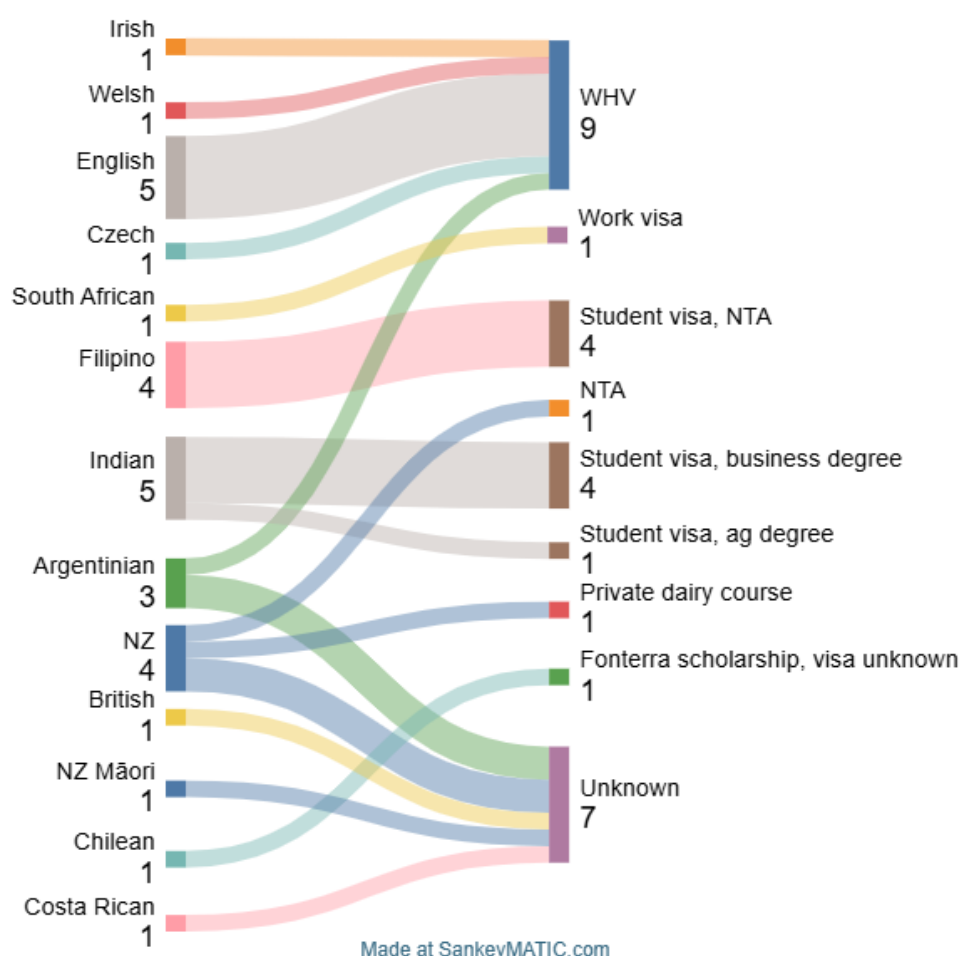


Figure 21 Participant Entry to NZ Dairy Industry. Work visa here refers to an AEWV.

Distinct and established pathways into dairy, dependent on nationality, were observed, along with the varying ease of access depending on pathway.

The New Zealanders in this group primarily entered the industry via the National Trade Academy (NTA) or a private course. A limitation of this study is that it did not ascertain for all New Zealanders how they accessed the industry.

Participants who could arrive on Working Holiday Visa (WHV) did so. This included British, Irish, European and some Latin American participants. Despite not being a requirement of entry for the WHV, all participants who arrived on this pathway held tertiary or college level

qualifications. The majority held tertiary degrees in agriculture, agronomy, or veterinary science.

By contrast, all Filipino and Indian participants arrived on a student visa. Whilst there is a WHV route for Filipinos, there are only 100 places available per year, and this requires applicants to have completed a 3-year degree (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). There is no current WHV route for Indians, although up to 1,000 places is expected following the Free Trade Agreement negotiations concluding (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.).

After undertaking a business or agricultural-related degree or qualification upon arrival in New Zealand, Indian participants entered the dairy industry. Most had also undertaken tertiary education in India.

All Filipino participants completed a National Training Academy (NTA) course on their student visa. One Filipino participant noted that nearly all on the NTA course were Filipino:

"There was 11 of us... we had three batches and most of us, were Filipinos... like 90%".

One New Zealand participant who had undertaken an NTA course 10+ years ago noted that there had been no Filipino on the course at the time. The only other ethnicity on the course had been Latin Americans. Given the nearly 9% increase in Filipinos to Canterbury's dairy industry between 2018 - 2023, it is no surprise the composition of students undertaking a dairy NTA course has also changed.

Some of those who arrived on a student visa described how they had come to enter the country on a student visa and to undertake an NTA course. This included financial investment (\$20,000 NZD), which for some, is considerable when compared to their home economy. One Filipino participant explained he had studied dairy farming in the Philippines for 6 months, then worked as a factory worker in another country for three years to save up to apply for a student visa.

"But it's so hard to apply here in New Zealand, so that's why I end up going to... work there as a factory worker, earn money and then apply for a student visa instead of a work visa, which is spent a lot of money with that".

Understanding the varying ease of access into Canterbury's dairy industry is important, because it is not equal. Here, ease is defined by immigration policy and pathways, as opposed to an individual's personal circumstances.

7.2 Motivators for entering dairy

Understanding why participants entered the dairy industry, including why they came to New Zealand, matters.

Motivators shape everything that follows in this report, including how workers navigate language, cultural differences, and their relationship with their team.

Why did they join the industry?

The overarching motivator for entering Canterbury's dairy industry was "the opportunity". Opportunity had many meanings:

- To buy a farm
- To progress through the dairy industry and "up the ladder"
- To earn money

- To gain residency
- To bring their families to New Zealand
- To remain in New Zealand

Motivators were generally bundled, with most participants describing a combination of primary and secondary motivators.

Opportunity to buy a farm

The opportunity to progress to farm ownership was a clear motivator for several participants. It was observed across all ethnicities interviewed. For some, this pathway would not be possible in their country of origin due to high land prices or lack of land availability, such as in India and the United Kingdom. One participant who had achieved farm ownership described this as being a key motivator for joining the industry.

"And we're Googling, how you can grow from farm assistant ... to share farming... you know, work hard and [you can] buy a farm. It's completely different, back from India ... people work for whole life over there, you won't be able to buy land".

Another described it as a "rags to riches" story:

"The example of a backpacker arriving with \$500 and now owns a 2,000-cow farm... a lot of people in this area working may have arrived here with little... there is a clear opportunity to achieve something".

Stability of Land Ownership

For some participants, the perceived stability of land tenure in New Zealand was a motivator adjacent to farm ownership. This was particularly in contrast to countries where political or legal instability made long-term land ownership feel less secure. One participant explained:

"[In Costa Rica] ... hard for their family because right now, the government can tell you, this area, you have to give 20% of your farm to the people".

The legal framework in New Zealand provides strong protections for private property once acquired, though this stability sits alongside an ongoing process of redress for historical Māori land loss through Treaty settlements.

Opportunity to progress

The opportunity to expand knowledge and progress in Canterbury's dairy industry was a driver for those who had worked in other countries where opportunities were limited. One participant had worked in the United States' dairy industry and shared:

"You see in the States, I know people been working in the same part for 15 years and still that same position. But here you see people with 20 years, and they already own some farms, or they manage the farms".

Two other British participants explained that in previous roles in U.K. dairy farming, they felt they and others had been pigeonholed into specific roles, which had stemmed their ability to acquire other skills:

"I've been on really intensive dairy farms, there was a lot of complicatedness to it, and the herd manager... he'd been there for 30 years... and he didn't have anything to do with the nutrition of the cows. So, it's quite segmented..."

"You are the person who would feed out and do all that, and... you just did that all day... just that was just your job".

Opportunity to earn money

The opportunity to earn a larger wage than in their country of origin was a key motivator. The strength of this driver varied depending on the economic gap between participants' home country and New Zealand. For those from countries with comparable wages, financial gain was less of a draw, whereas for those from countries with significant wage gaps, it was one of the key motivators for moving. Two Filipino participants explained this directly:

"But one thing is that quite often, people are satisfied with what they're earning because they know this. It's a very big, very big money back home".

"Wait for that first paycheck... and wow".

This also enabled some participants to send money back to family in their country of origin. One farm owner indicated that it wasn't just the salary that was important, but what could be enabled with it:

"And you know, their parents don't own a car, but after a while, they buy a car. You want to see their faces! How made they are having a car to drive... And then when they go home, and they don't go over often..., they go and buy a suit and then mum and dad knows they've made it".

Whilst most motivators associated with wage referred to migrants arriving from lower-income economies, some participants had worked with "backpackers" (WHV holders). They noted their colleagues had worked for short periods in busy seasons, and this was primarily for the money and accommodation.

Bring family to New Zealand

By earning more, some participants could bring their families to New Zealand. This was a trend noticed over recent years, as previously, the migrant workforce had included more single workers.

"You see a lot more people with families in the area".

"Yeah, we're in a situation now where they've all got visas and they can bring their family over, which is great for them".

The strength of this motivator is significant. It was common for participants to describe colleagues who have been separated from their family, or for participants to describe having left "their wife and child" in their country of origin for up to 5 years. Being parted for such a significant amount of time indicates how strongly these participants want to be in New Zealand and the dairy industry to achieve their long-term goals.

Work Life Balance

For participants from the UK, Ireland, and Europe, a secondary motivator for being in the dairy industry was the mentality around work. Canterbury's dairy industry rewards and encourages a work-life balance; which contrasted with the mentality of "living to work" they had experienced elsewhere.

"At home, we're generally criticised for finishing early, having time off. It's all about who works the hardest and who works the latest. And if the boss is off, it's like, oh, the boss is slacking.... whereas here, time off and hobbies and socialising is celebrated from every experience I've had..."

This motivator did not simply apply to migrants from overseas. One New Zealand participant who had moved to Canterbury from the North Island relayed his shock at the culture of being able to adapt his work to play rugby. He cited this as Canterbury-specific culture, originating from long standing families, to facilitate community and sport-oriented activities.

"In the North Island, I gave up rugby when I was like 23 because I had to milk cows on Saturday. You couldn't go down and play for your local club, but in Canterbury, she's up bending over backwards to have you go and play for the local club. Why? The people that had the farms, you know, they were generally family-owned farms, and they've all been here for 100 years..."

Other motivators

For many participants who had arrived on a WHV, one of the motivators for being in the dairy industry was to allow them to stay in the country. Other motivators included working with animals and being provided with accommodation. Accommodation was a strong secondary motivator for many people, and in some cases, a primary motivator for those on a WHV. Other motivators included the availability of work and the perceived lack of competition for work - with the right attitude anyone can work in dairy.

"It's quite well known in the UK farming industry that it's easy to get dairy jobs over here".

"I wanted to be in the area, yeah, again, always heard big things back in Ireland, but New Zealand dairy, place to be".

Many New Zealanders don't want to do it

Throughout the interviews, participants acknowledged that they were able to enter the dairy industry because the local or domestic workforce could not or did not want to.

It is here that understanding motivators becomes relevant. For those who view dairy as an opportunity to achieve long-term goals such as buying a farm, supporting family or securing residency, there was an undercurrent of willingness to apply themselves in ways that those without those drivers might not. It could be suggested that an industry, or team, built up of people with long-term motivators and goals outperforms a team without - and impacts team dynamics, performance, and retention. This is explored below.

7.3 Does prior dairy experience shape who enters the industry?

We now have a clear understanding of who is in Canterbury's dairy workforce from section 6, such as New Zealanders, Filipino, Latin American, Indian, British and Irish. However, what are these people's backgrounds and how does this influence how and why they arrived into Canterbury's dairy industry?

An overwhelming number of participants (81.25%) had an agricultural background, spanning from family ties to agriculture, to agricultural-related degrees to farm ownership in their country of origin. Only six of the 32 participants did not have an agricultural background.

For those migrating to New Zealand, the requirements for most AEWV visas requires applicants to demonstrate a minimum of two years of relevant dairy experience or a relevant qualification. Whilst arriving with agricultural backgrounds, few of the participants had directly transferable dairy experience and skills when arriving into Canterbury's dairy industry. Most used a National Trade Academy (NTA) course, or their WHV, to gain the relevant experience to move to an AEWV. This indicates that whilst an agricultural background is a precursor to entering the dairy industry, it is only once most people arrive in New Zealand and either learn on farm through a WHV or through private training that they gain the qualifications or skills in order to progress and remain within the dairy industry.

The willingness to learn therefore becomes a key trait of the people in Canterbury's dairy workforce and is particularly relevant when considering the systems of dairy people are coming from.

The Philippines, for example, has almost no dairy industry, producing only around 1% of its own milk demand (USDA FAS, 2024). Though the world's largest milk producer, India's dairy industry is overwhelmingly a smallholder, buffalo-based system that bears little resemblance to a Canterbury operation (USDA FAS, 2023). By contrast, Irish and southern Latin American systems are pasture-based and seasonal, far closer to New Zealand's, whilst the U.K's dairy systems are generally smaller and more intense (CSO, 2024; Fariña & Chilbroste, 2019).

This indicates there is no apparent relationship between the dairy system someone comes from and their place in Canterbury's workforce. The largest migrant group, Filipinos, arrive from a country with almost no dairy industry, while Latin Americans arrive from systems closely comparable to New Zealand's. Whether someone arrives with directly transferable experience or none at all, entering Canterbury's dairy industry means learning and it is the willingness to do so, paired with the opportunity that motivates it, that seems to underpin this workforce from overseas.

8. Composition of Canterbury's Multicultural Teams

What types of multicultural teams are there in Canterbury's dairy industry?

The composition of a team influences what plays out within it. There were several team compositions identified from participant descriptions, yet none were the same. This is shown in Table 6.

Every participant with influence over recruitment was shaping the cultural composition of their team, whether intentionally or not. Some were deliberate, intentionally filtering for certain characteristics and English proficiency, whilst others created teams guided by values, networks or both.

Given the focus of this study through a multicultural lens, no all-New-Zealand teams were interviewed - a limitation of the analysis of "Canterbury dairy teams".

Table 6 Team Composition of participants interviewed

Team Type	Description	Recruitment
Monocultural team	A team of the same ethnicity and cultural background, from farm owner to farm assistant. All employees were from a 50k radius of farm owner's home in India.	Community network. Recruitment involved using networks from country of origin, in alignment with collective values and as a way of trusting their reference.
Monocultural workforce with cross-cultural leadership	A workforce made up of people from the same ethnicity (Philippines), from 2IC to farm assistant. Their leader was from New Zealand.	Consensual recruitment. The team chose who joined based on best fit.
Monocultural workforce with cross-cultural leadership	A workforce made up of people from the same ethnicity (Philippines), from 2IC to farm assistant. The leader was from Wales.	Family network recruitment. Team is primarily made up of family members.
Multicultural	Multicultural team consisting of different ethnic backgrounds.	Personality-first. Recruitment "personality over culture" based, with fifteen years of diverse teams as a byproduct.
Multicultural	Multicultural team consisting of different ethnic backgrounds.	Structured diversity. Intentional team composition to avoid cultural clustering (people of the same ethnicity) and requiring certain level of English.
Multicultural	Multicultural team consisting of different ethnic backgrounds.	Egalitarian and systems led. A multicultural team held together by flat hierarchy, strong systems, and an explicit "everyone helps everyone" ethos.
Multicultural	Multicultural team consisting of different ethnic backgrounds.	Values and network-based recruitment. A multicultural team built primarily through a combination of values-based hiring and personal network access. Cultural composition is incidental rather than intentional, with skillset matching used alongside network recruitment.
Multicultural	Multicultural team consisting of different ethnic backgrounds.	Ethnically paired team - two workers of each cultural group, whether by design or as a natural outcome of accommodation and network patterns.

8.1 Observations

Regardless of how the team was formed, functional teams existed. Anecdotally, good retention and team performance were reported across the whole spectrum, though these were only managers' opinions and didn't factor in other considerations (such as team opinions) to verify.

Monocultural teams were generally more network-built and in this case, contained more collectivist ethnicities such as Indians and Filipino. Meanwhile, multicultural teams were more values-built.

Some managers of multicultural teams were more likely to employ a portion of their team from the same country as themselves, though there were also incidences where this was not the case. What was apparent, however, was that the manager's own background and experience influenced how they operated their system, built, managed and supported their people.

Accommodation was one structural factor that influenced the team composition; where farms shared accommodation, this attracted certain types of participants, like single individuals or those on working holiday visas.

8.2 Structural Intervention

One of the largest multicultural teams analysed took an approach Brett et al., (2006) called structural intervention. Alongside the standard considerations of dairy experience and skills, the team was characterised by strong English proficiency and a degree of cultural integration.

Here, the manager was also actively managing the composition of the team to avoid "ethnic pairing", namely, to reduce language and cultural friction observed elsewhere. Lau & Murnighan (1998) and Bezrukova et al. (2009)'s "Faultline Theory", whereby a team's performance is negatively influenced by sub-groups formed based on ethnicity, explains the phenomenon that this participant had experienced and was actively managing against.

The participant from the team where ethnic pairing was present also confirmed the friction "Faultline Theory" predicts. But they also described a benefit that is not accounted for: the pairing of a fluent and less-fluent speaker of the same language to allow the two to support one another and for one to support the other with communication to the rest of the team (Al-Naemi et al., 2025).

This suggests that the best approach is to shape the team deliberately and prevent friction before it starts. However, where a manager has less influence over recruitment, or fewer people to recruit from, the pairing can help the team function operationally, despite the sub-groups that form.

8.3 Managerial Intervention

The team underpinned by a flat (egalitarian) hierarchy, strong systems, and an explicit "everyone helps everyone" ethos could fall under a second of Brett et al., (2006)'s strategies to successfully manage multicultural teams. Here, the expectation and cultural baseline of the team was explicit around egalitarian principles. This participant described how he communicated this during recruitment. By setting team norms early and establishing expectations, this seemed to reduce friction or cultural differences from emerging naturally.

8.4 “Personality over Culture” Recruitment

Interestingly, literature supports a 'personality over culture' approach to building a multicultural team. Dotan-Eliaz et al. (2009), Schmitz and Schmitz (2022) and Earley and Ang (2003) all point to a motivated, proactive personality, one more likely to actively learn the language and integrate into a new culture, as a driver of better performance in a multicultural team. This implies that, without being able to name it, this participant intuitively recognised what Earley and Ang (2003) term 'motivational cultural intelligence', the drive to learn about and adapt to new cultures, and built a thriving multicultural team on that.

9. Cultural Differences

What cultural differences occur on farm?

Participants were asked to describe the cultural differences observed on farm. This section is primarily derived from participant responses from multicultural teams, suggesting that cultural differences are less visible on monocultural teams.

Two forms of cultural difference were observed: through how people communicated and how they behaved. These are identified in Table 7:

Table 7 Cultural Differences observed on farm

Observed Cultural Difference	Type
New Zealand transparency	Communication
Not Speaking Up	Communication
Responses to Conflict	Communication
"Do you understand?" "Yes"	Communication
Swearing	Communication
Use of tone	Communication
The use of "Sir and Boss"	Communication
Attitudes to women on farm	Behaviour
The 20L Bucket	Behaviour
Age and seniority progression vs. performance	Behaviour
Perception of rushing versus being efficient	Behaviour
Different working styles, for example, wanting to do more work in the morning than the afternoon	Behaviour
Certain cultures valuing gifts more than others	Behaviour
Only going to social events when the boss asks them to, not when other colleagues ask them to	Behaviour

The most prevalent cultural differences seen on farm related to Filipino cultural differences. This may be unsurprising, given New Zealand and the Philippines sit on opposite ends of most cultural scales and the Filipino community was identified as the fastest growing composition of Canterbury's dairy workforce between 2018 – 2023 (Meyer, 2014).

The most common cultural differences (highlighted in blue above) have been explored further below, investigating **why** these differences may occur. There is a risk of generalisation in this, which is acknowledged. Any interpretation of this should therefore consider understanding the individual, before the culture.

9.1 Cultural Differences - Communication

New Zealand - Transparency

Several participants acknowledged that New Zealand communication is transparent and straight to the point. This was identified by both New Zealanders and those who had migrated to New Zealand. British and Filipino participants acknowledged this, though without attributing negativity to it:

"Kiwis are pretty blunt... Like, they're going to say what they need to say though they're not going to do it in a harsh way".

"Because my old boss is very blunt, like, it's very straightforward, but in a good way..."

The cultural norm of communicating in an explicit way is clear here – this is the accepted way for people in New Zealand dairy to communicate (Meyer, 2014). But why?

In a flat cultural structure, where respect is given regardless of stature, speaking up is not considered disrespectful or risky (Hofstede, 2001). That is not the case, however, in other cultures.

Not Speaking Up

One of the most common cultural differences identified was Filipino colleagues 'not speaking up'.

Two of the Filipino participants stated they were less likely to speak up, unless they had a good relationship with their boss:

"If we have something we notice and something wrong with the boss. We don't complain. We just keep it to ourselves".

"Yeah, if I am confident talking to my boss, but if not confident, I just rather keep it to myself".

Two things are apparent here; the context of "the boss" and communication being dependent on the strength of the relationship.

Hierarchy

The first consideration is the strong cultural acceptance of hierarchy in the Philippines, which influences how safe someone feels to speak up to a figure of authority. The Philippines scores 94 on Hofstede's power distance index (very hierarchical) compared to New Zealand's 22 (egalitarian) (Hofstede, 2001). In a highly hierarchical society, the distance between a worker and a figure of authority is significant and governs what can and cannot be said to someone of higher status. Speaking up, questioning an instruction, or making a request is not easy when it risks "overstepping your position" (Meyer, 2014). It carries a weight that is not seen in a more egalitarian culture like New Zealand.

Clashing norms around hierarchy are a recognised challenge in multicultural teams globally, meaning the dairy industry is not unique in facing it (Brett et al., 2006).

Trust

Trust also operates differently. In Meyer's (2014) framework, good work can build trust in New Zealand, whereas in Filipino culture, trust is more relationship-based, built slowly through personal connection and not through task performance. The Filipino participants framed

their hesitation around “keeping to themselves” specifically in terms of confidence with the boss, suggesting that communication is conditional on trust. Once trust has been formed, Filipino colleagues may be more likely to feel comfortable speaking up.

Participants described their Filipino colleagues as 'shy, soft, quiet and sensitive', noting how they communicated differently from the rest of the team. Examples included not notifying the team when something broke on farm, an issue arising with a team member, or wanting something but not asking for it directly:

“...Say, he's playing a soccer match. He'll say, I've got soccer, but not I want to play, can I leave early? Eventually, like the day before, he'll say, but I want to go play. And then it's hard to adjust the roster, instead of saying a week ago, and you can make a plan...”

“... But even like basic stuff on the farm... not even communicating with their bosses about something that's gone wrong with the house. So, I guess there is a cultural background to that”.

High Context communication

Another consideration is - what does normal communication look like in the Philippines? On Meyer (2014)'s scale, the Philippines sits at the high-context end, which means that there are many forms of communication, not all of which involve speaking. Tone, context, and what is implied all carry meaning.

For example, with the soccer example above, mentioning the match may have been the request to leave early, with the expectation being that the listener would read the mention itself as the request. However, in New Zealand, where communication is explicit, the listener may miss this signal and not know to interpret it as a request. This is in line with Brett et al. (2006)'s research into managing multicultural teams, whereby direct versus indirect communication impacted multicultural team's success.

Filipino Cultural Values

There are two specific Filipino cultural values that may also influence speaking up. Before describing them, it must be acknowledged that these descriptions are framed for a Western audience and therefore may not fully translate from a Filipino context (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

Hiya is a deep cultural sensitivity to shame, propriety, and avoiding embarrassment. This makes raising an issue feel risky and shapes whether an individual speaks up at all. Speaking up could embarrass the individual by making them seem “demanding”, “stupid” or embarrass the boss by suggesting that they have failed to provide.

There is no equivalent of the weight *Hiya* carries in New Zealand. The closest may be “not wanting to put somebody out”, although interpreting it as this undermines its depth as a core Filipino value (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). *Hiya* may have underpinned this comment:

“I guess... it comes off demanding, like you're asking a bit too much from your boss”.

One participant also explained that speaking up might insinuate that you are not intelligent, which may also relate.

“Yes, nothing wrong to ask... you will not diminish your intelligence... if you ask questions”.

A second foundational Filipino value is *Kapwa*. *Kapwa* is the relational worldview that recognises other people as part of one's own inner self. This drives a strong desire for individuals to maintain harmony and consider the relational impact of words before speaking to them. Through this lens, speaking up is not just about expressing a view but about what words will do to the person that you are connected to (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Enrique, 1978).

Visa and financial insecurity

When asked why they kept it to themselves, Filipino participants explained the perceived impact speaking may do to their job security, visa status and in turn, life in New Zealand. This was exacerbated if they had brought family to New Zealand but had not yet achieved residency.

"We're not complaining, because we are in a working visa at that time. And there's the bad, really bad experience for them".

"They said I'm going to deport you or something like that.... Yeah, that's my visa is attached to my job... So that's why, if they're mad at me for this, I just accept it and then keep silent".

"Because we're thinking immigrants, we're not locals, we're not, you know, we're thinking about that, and especially my family here, if they're going to kick me out, then I have nowhere to go..."

However, it was not just visa insecurity; but also, financial security that restricted participants from feeling they could speak up. Laughing, one participant said:

"We will speak up when we are rich".

This is further exacerbated where participants had sacrificed significantly to get to New Zealand. For the participant who has spent several years saving to come to New Zealand, and over five years away from his family, he described this adjacent to the visa insecurity concerns.

Ingrained Hangover from Colonization

A final consideration is the historical context of the Philippines and its history of being colonised by Spain, as explained by one participant:

"So, the Spanish were in the Philippines... They colonised us for 300 years. Yeah, when Spanish came, they impose abusive things...on how Filipino can express their opinion... That's why some of them adopt that. You really adopt that behaviour".

Responses to Conflict

Another cultural difference identified was the response by some cultures to conflict. One Filipino participant explained that conflict is something that is much longer lasting than what he had experienced on farm.

"It's just how we are culturally that, like that sort of thing will just fester, like for weeks or even months... you just tend to be a bit more anxious, working like and then you start walking on eggshells as you go until, until the time you're confident that that's really over..."

Another noted:

"For a lot of Filipinos, it's just a culture... hate being confronted with some with that stuff".

"They're afraid. They're sort of avoiding that sort of situation".

Similarly, a Chilean participant noted that in his culture, conflict is not simply discussed and done.

"But in New Zealand... a kiwi manager or boss, he can lose his temper with you. And then after two hours... back to normal. If Latino fight with you, you know this is going to take days. We won't talk. If we need to do work, we do job together. We won't say anything. But it's really different."

The reason?

"[Here...] it's not personal. That is a good thing. European people won't take it as a person. But in my culture, they will take personally. That's why they will take long, right?"

As one of the most individualist cultures in the world, New Zealand treats conflict more functionally than many other cultures: once an issue is raised and resolved, the relationship generally remains unaffected (Hofstede, 2001).

Filipino and Chilean cultures sit at the opposite end of the individualism scale. Both are strongly collectivist, meaning identity is defined through the group rather than the individual. Conflict, in this context, is therefore not contained to the issue; it disturbs the group itself and is felt personally. It therefore requires more time to repair (Hofstede, 2001).

Both are also strongly relationship based, meaning trust operates differently. Where a working relationship is held together by personal connection rather than the task itself, conflict damages the personal connection the relationship depends on, which is why it takes far longer to recover (Meyer, 2014).

For Filipino, *Hiya* and *Kapwa* also underpin the aversion to conflict. *Hiya*, the sensitivity to shame and propriety, makes confrontation a risk to the dignity of everyone involved, whilst *Kapwa*, the relational worldview that locates others within one's own inner self, frames conflict as damage to the self, as well as to the relationship (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

This relates to the previous point of a Filipino "not speaking up". If speaking up could lead to conflict, this could disrupt both *Hiya* and *Kapwa* and cause long-term effects.

"Do you understand?" - "Yes"

Numerous participants noted that Filipinos they had worked with said 'yes' to understanding instructions when they did not understand.

"And I feel like if you ask him to do something. He really wants to do it. It's not about like him trying to show off. He's just like, yes, I want to do it. I could do it. But then he just says yes before he can think about it".

"So, like, instead of explaining that they didn't understand the job initially, they'll just try and work it out themselves".

This is consistent with the cultural patterns described above. Saying "yes", even if the instruction has not been fully understood, avoids the discomfort of questioning authority and the embarrassment of appearing incapable; both of which carry significant cultural weight under *hiya*. However, when viewed through the lens of health and safety on dairy farms, this can become a significant risk for the individual and others on farm. The risk of this was such

that the engagement of those with different cultural backgrounds into health and safety on dairy farms was explored by Fowles in 2022.

It is also reinforced by the core Filipino principle of *bahala na*, where determination and courage to take on a task with confidence that it can be worked out, rather than refusing, is taken on (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

Filipino - Swearing

For some, the use of swear words by mainly New Zealanders on farm was a significant cultural difference. For one Filipino participant with a religious background, this was the first and most significant cultural difference between the Philippines and New Zealand.

"Yeah, wow. The yelling and the swearing.... It's quite hurting for my ears. [If somebody was swearing in the Philippines, what did that mean?] Oh, it's bad. Yeah, it's bad. It's really bad. Um... bad people..."

Another noted:

"... it's like very normal for them [New Zealanders], but me growing up, my mom don't swear. My father don't swear. My wife don't swear. My mother-in-law don't swear. Yeah, we just kind of don't know that language".

In the Philippines, swearing carries weight. Over 90% of Filipinos in New Zealand are Christian, a remnant of Spanish colonisation. Religious values place strong emphasis on respectful, restrained speech. Swearing is associated with low character or moral failure, which might relate to "the bad people," one participant described it (Walrond, 2015).

However, not all Filipino participants found swearing to be an issue, reinforcing the importance of avoiding generalising.

9.2 Cultural Differences Explored – Behavioural

Attitudes to Women on Farm

A number of New Zealand, British, Irish, European and Latin American participants identified cultural differences with certain ethnicities and their attitudes to women on farm. These were most often described as an assumption of "blue and pink jobs", whereby some team members expected their female colleagues to only undertake certain jobs, male colleagues not looking them in the eye when speaking or refusing to talk to them directly. A few cited inappropriate behaviour, including unwanted physical contact or invitations.

The majority of the female participants simply acknowledged these as cultural differences, with some citing that they expected their colleague had not worked with women on farm before. These responses did, however, depend on the severity of the action.

Where this was raised by male participants, however, both expressed this as a "lack of respect" and either verbally corrected or intentionally disrupted specific behaviours towards women on farm.

Cultures differ in how clearly gender roles are defined. Hofstede (2001) measured this through the masculinity dimension, whereby higher scores indicate cultures where male and female roles are more clearly separated. The Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka score moderately to highly, whilst New Zealand scores lower. This is underpinned by egalitarianism, whereby males and females are generally viewed as equal. For workers arriving in Canterbury dairy,

encountering women in identical roles to men for the first time, may be culturally unfamiliar. Behaviours such as gendered task allocation, avoiding eye contact, or addressing women indirectly may reflect a different cultural script for how men and women interact at work, as opposed to deliberate disrespect.

Whilst offering an explanation as to why these differences arise, it is imperative to note that Hofstede's framework describes what is typical in a country, not what every individual from that country does. They therefore cannot, and should not be, generalised across all workers from these cultures.

That said, inappropriate behaviour such as unwanted physical contact is inexcusable and falls outside the realm of cultural variation.

All Filipino team & Hierarchy

The only cultural difference acknowledged on an all-Filipino team, with a cross-cultural (New Zealand) manager, was where hierarchy seemed to contribute. Team disruption was caused when a younger team member was promoted, in place of an older colleague who had been on the farm longer.

Hofstede (2001) measures this through power distance. In high-power-distance cultures, age earns respect, authority and often, progression. This differs from New Zealand workplace norms, where promotion is based on performance and contribution. It also suggests that where monocultural worker teams are present, it may preserve the cultural baseline of their country of origin.

The 20L Bucket

One of the most surprising cultural differences involved the carrying of the 20L bucket. In four different instances, participants described respect as who offered to or didn't offer to, or who carried and who didn't carry the 20L bucket.

The first participant, a female participant from Europe, recalled she had continually refused a male colleague's offer of carrying the buckets. A second female noted how a colleague took the bucket out of her hand and carried them for them, despite her undertaking the task daily and asking him to not help. Both framed the assumption that they couldn't carry the bucket as disrespectful. This contrasted with a male participant who, upon seeing one of his team not assisting his wife with carrying a 20L bucket, was outraged that they hadn't offered to help.

"My wife would just be carrying 20L buckets of milk across and they would just be standing there. I should never see you do that. Carry the buckets for her!"

Meanwhile a final participant acknowledged that if they had seen somebody who needs help carrying a bucket, they would have helped.

"For me, my culture is I help you because you are a human - not because you are a man, woman, a goat, or whatever you are".

Respect does not map onto a single dimension within Hofstede or Meyer's frameworks because respect is not a single concept. It is a value expressed differently across multiple dimensions; through how authority is treated (power distance), how relationships are maintained (collectivism), how men and women interact (gender role definition), and how trust is built (relationship versus task-based). The bucket sits amongst all these dimensions,

which is why it generated such contradiction. Interestingly, it also showcases the cultural differences found amongst different genders and generations – something little explored in this report.

In all instances, parties had a different definition of respect; none of which are necessarily right, or wrong.

Impact of cultural differences

Cultural differences may be underlying but they are not invisible. Participants of Canterbury's dairy workforce experienced cultural differences as part of their working lives and were all able to describe experiences that were caused by differing cultural norms. Yet, as one participant commented:

"Yes, there are cultural differences, but the farm still functions..."

The impact of cultural differences lies in the unique context of each farm; its team sizes, its personalities and importantly, what situation the cultural difference is being applied to. Where a colleague did not speak up about a broken microwave, there was little impact on the farm operation. Where they stopped speaking up because a relationship had unknowingly been damaged and resigned "out of the blue", this alludes to cultural differences influencing farm retention. Where they did not speak up about failing brakes on a bike, this posed a health and safety concern to other team members. The impact of cultural differences in health and safety has already been explored by Fowles (2021).

Cultural differences are the starting condition; context determines the impact they have on the farming operation, staff retention, and team success.

10. Language and Non-Native Speakers

What influence does language have in a multicultural dairy team?

Language arose as a key theme equal to, and in some cases, more frequently than cultural differences. Given the significance of good communication to operational success in dairy, this is not unsurprising.

Just under half of the participants of this research (15) spoke English as a second language. Each had varying English proficiency on arrival in New Zealand. For Latin American and European participants, the topic of language was spoken about more emotively than other parts of the interview, indicating the deeper implications working as a non-native speaker can hold for those who move to New Zealand.

Learning English – Essential for Progression

There was strong consensus among most participants that achieving a high English proficiency was essential for progressing in the dairy industry. Not only was this to facilitate better integration, but also a requirement for those wanting to progress to self-employment and farm ownership.

“You must know English, because once you know English, more responsibility will come to you, right?”

“Let's say, if I'm a manager with a basic English level, probably the farm owner is all good. He can understand me, but if I have to communicate with a contractor, kiwi, it would be impossible. You have to communicate with the employees, the contractors, not only the farm owner...”

Layers of Language

Participants detailed language in layers. As one participant noted:

“...You're not only learning a new job, but you're learning a new language and dialect”.

Accents, Speaking Too fast, Slang Words

Much of the frustration around language was around accent, talking speed and use of slang. Several participants demonstrated a high level of English proficiency but had learnt British or American English – not Kiwi English. As two participants noted:

“When I first came here, I did speak English, but I just couldn't pick up on the Kiwi accent”.

“It's really hard... I have some Kiwi person that I listen to, and I can understand their English, but some of them I really cannot understand. Yeah, it's just the way they speak”.

This was acknowledged by one of the self-employed New Zealand participants who worked with an all-Filipino team.

“And we're very lazy. We take shortcuts in our sentences.... They can't hear at all. So, there's just those sorts of things you pick up”.

However, this is two-directional. As one participant noted, those working in multicultural teams adjust to lots of different accents:

"If you're a native English speaker, it's easier, whereas if you're a Filipino speaking English and a South American speaking English or German speaking English, it's you're having to adjust to the accents... And even for them, they have to learn our English level".

These experiences are not uncommon in global multicultural teams, with Brett et al. (2006) citing accents and fluency as one of the barriers to a successful team.

Farm Language

Each farm used certain farm language that was unique to them.

"Every farm is going to have their own words, yeah, which are in line with their system."

"So, you learn English like this, and then somebody come with slang, and especially in farming, because farming has its own words".

Even on an all-first English speaking team, there were nuances in farm language. In one given example, two of the same team came from the same region in Ireland. With a similar background and understanding of Irish farm systems, they used words the other English-speaking team members did not understand. This indicates that even the meaning of words in English need explaining, which requires team members to ask, adapt or remain quiet and unclear about the meaning of the words.

"Like, if we're one injecting calves, it's just a jab whereas if you've never really heard someone say jab..."

Emotions

One of the most emotive aspects of the interviews was when non-native English-speaking participants described working in an English-speaking environment. The emotions described below are consistent with the findings of Tenzer et al. (2014) and Dotan-Eliaz et al. (2009), emphasising that this is not simply confined to dairy.

Feeling stupid, frustrated and stressed

Participants described feelings of stupidity, frustration and stress around speaking English, which was exacerbated during busy times of the year, such as calving.

"Because you feel really stupid, like you make a person say something for the fifth time, and you'll be like, I'm so sorry. I have no idea what you're saying".

Feeling nervous and anxious

Others described feelings of nervousness and anxiousness about speaking English. This transcended farm work and impacted all aspects of life, including calling a doctor, going to a supermarket, and basic aspects of living.

"Most Filipinos are quite self-conscious about their English".

"If there is someone else, I just talk in English, but they feel ashamed to speak English in front of others ... in reverse, you have to learn to be self-confident".

The notion of self-confidence is a primary finding of Neeley (2013)'s study, who found that perceived English proficiency impacts how second language speakers responded to social situations. Strong self-belief was a predictor of speaking up, even if English proficiency levels were low.

Not speaking up

These feelings of anxiousness, stress, and feeling excluded contributed towards people not speaking up - both in the sense of contributing to conversations or clarifying what instructions mean.

"Many times, I wanted to tell you something and I want to explain you something, but I can't, so I just stop the conversation."

"Because sometimes with as me, I'm speaking as a Filipino, I'm shy to admit that I don't understand what they said".

Feeling Excluded

Not understanding made some participants feel left out and not able to participate in conversations with their colleagues. One participant described how the conversation tended to have moved on by the time she had processed what had been said:

"You're just processing, processing and therefore you're not contributing, because you can't."

"And we have a girl, she speaks reasonable English, but she wouldn't understand all of it, and I think she even feel left out sometime".

This exclusion seemed to impact team cohesion. One participant argued that trust and relationships are built on from through language and by not having the same level of proficiency, this can impact the way in which you build relationships.

"And also allows you to have that kind of jokey relationship... a little bit easier sometimes you can speak English together".

Participants' accounts of feeling "left out" reflect what Dotan-Eliaz et al. (2009) defines as linguistic ostracism, which reduces feeling of belonging and team potency. In this example, the exclusion was unintentional, yet still impacted the language-based trust and rapport through which workplace relationships are built (Neeley et al., 2012).

Cognitive Load of Translating

The cognitive load of translating into English all the time was also cited. Again, at busy times of year, this could be more profound.

"It keep your mind busy and tired all the time.... just translating into English".

"Do you know how smart I am in my own language?"

Three of the Latin American participants used the expression – "Do you know how smart I am in my own language?". Of all the participants, those arriving from Latin America described low levels of English proficiencies upon arrival, as this is not a requirement of their WHV. Paired with the fact that these participants all had completed tertiary education in agriculture, agronomy, or veterinary, the frustration was palpable.

"Once you come to your country, you will have a lot of knowledge another language, right?"

"You know how smart I am in my in my language, and I cannot express that?"

What the participants describe here is what Neeley (2013) identified in her work on status loss: where individuals hold deep knowledge and expertise but cannot show it in English.

Language as power

Some participants reported instances of being talked down to, or feeling they had been bullied, by native speaking colleagues. This was observed by a native speaker:

"A... lad used to talk to Filipino staff pretty horribly. I would not have put up with being spoken to like that. I would have left. It's not nice for other people witnessing it, even if you're not the one getting spoken to like that, either".

This was also reported with regards to safety on farms. For one participant who experienced inappropriate behaviour from a male team member, she felt she did not have the confidence in her English proficiency to report it. Here, low self-perceived fluency influenced participants' ability to speak up and protected the person who took advantage. This emphasises Neeley's (2013) findings that workers' confidence in their own English shapes whether they assert themselves or hold back.

Team Composition & Language Spoken

Most farm teams discussed in this research were multicultural, with English spoken on farm. It was only on multicultural teams where language arose as a barrier.

Four of the farms in this study had same language teams that were not English and instead spoke Indian, Filipino and Spanish. These farms did not report friction around language use on farms. This was confirmed by one participant who praised the ability to communicate in the same language on farm.

"You know, it's easy to communicate. Communication is way, way much better".

That said, this participant intentionally chose to move to multicultural farms due to his long-term ambitions in the dairy industry and to avoid certain cultural factors that he had experienced in working in all-Filipino teams.

Majority one language

Exclusion was more prevalent where the farm team was made up of a majority of one culture and a minority of another. The composition of a team and specifically the balance of cultural and linguistic groups within it, directly affected how language was used day to day, and who is included or excluded as a result.

"If you have too many of one culture, they can be tricky or they group up and then you know it's too much of one language being spoken... that's why everybody has to speak English and I think that's really healthy".

"If they all speak the same language, you know, I worry about putting in an Indian with four Filipinos because... then an Indian who's not fluent in English, Filipinos not fluent in English, trying to communicate in English".

11. Adaption, Enablers and Translators

How do migrants to Canterbury's dairy industry adapt and who helps them?

With one New Zealand participant declaring Ashburton “*The Orphan Capital of New Zealand*”, many within Canterbury's dairy workforce have adapted to Canterbury-specific or the New Zealand culture.

Adapting to New Zealand Culture

There was strong consensus from those who had migrated to New Zealand that they felt it was their responsibility to adapt to New Zealand culture.

“But... I'm coming into this country; it should be up to me to adapt”.

“I mean, we are going to different country, different culture, so we have to change. So, there are few things we must learn, new habits and new behaviours”.

“And I think if you just left everything... you should try to be focused on where you are now”.

“Yeah... I know how to cook a pie now”.

Underpinning these quotes lies Berry's (1992) process of acculturation; the cultural change that happens when someone from one culture lives within another culture - and how they position themselves in that new environment.

Out of context, these quotes may not signal how respondents have responded to their move to New Zealand. However, within context of the wider interviews, these quotes represent signals of integration – whereby someone can perform within the Canterbury dairy cultural baseline while maintaining their cultural identity. This was described by a Filipino participant who described the two cultures he lived and worked in, but that his identity still lay with his roots:

“I still have the Filipino thing with me, within me, yeah?”

Integrating

But wanting to integrate and knowing how to integrate are two different things – with a lifelong programming of one culture in mind, where do you start?

For some migrants, adapting to New Zealand culture was easy. These participants were British, Irish, European and South African. One participant commented:

“I mean, accents are different, but I don't see a huge cultural difference, because we are all Europeans...”

Their adaption to New Zealand and the dairy industry was framed around being aware of more transparent and direct communication. No behavioural cultural differences were observed, apart from by British female participants, where egalitarian foundations were made visible by the number of women working on farms and the assumption that all staff, regardless of gender, would and could undertake all tasks.

This contrasted to participants from South America, India and the Philippines, who spoke about adapting to and learning New Zealand culture. They also identified something interesting – that most had been supported in their roles by the enablers and translators on farm.

11.1 The Enablers

Cultural Enablers

Participants identified there were people on farm who not only helped to translate language, but cultural expectations to newcomers – what was considered “normal” and often required to work in a successful Canterbury dairy team.

For one participant who had arrived from the Philippines, his 2IC had tried to alleviate his concerns around swearing by explaining that in New Zealand, it is considered a term of phrase. This was something that had been impacting the relationship between the participant and his New Zealander colleague. Here, we define the 2IC as “the enabler”. In turn, this participant then described how he had supported his other Filipino colleagues to understand the cultural expectations on farm, becoming an “enabler” himself.

Another gave numerous examples of translating cultural expectations to his Filipino colleagues, particularly around communication. Given this was one of the most common cultural differences noted on farm, it emphasises the importance of having, or recognising, an enabler on a team.

The participant advised his colleagues to speak up, especially if they had not understood an instruction – avoiding saying “yes”, when they didn't understand.

“I try to get them into that sort of mindset at the start... just tell your boss what happened. Just tell them that you'd rather have them angry at you for this screw up, rather than it then being a bigger problem.... It is hard culturally; most Filipinos will just try and keep it to themselves. They are afraid of that sort of backlash, but it's something that we just have to get over”.

This example is what Jang (2017) presents as the “Cultural Broker”. Here, the participant actively uses their knowledge of both cultures to support their team in meeting the cultural expectations of their New Zealand leader. It also shows cognitive and metacognitive CQ, principles developed by Earley and Ang (2003) and Van Dyne et al. (2008).

However, learning to speak up is only the first stage - learning how to do it in a culturally correct way, is another. It has already been established that in the Philippines, it may not be as normal to speak up compared to higher context culture (whereby reading the atmosphere is a form of communication), or where the person is nervous about speaking English or due to visa or financial insecurity.

A participant explained that when a Filipino does speak up, they then may not be able to judge whether they “appear offensive, aggressive or demanding”. One Filipino participant advised his Filipino colleagues to say:

“I am trying to communicate but I do not want to appear demanding or offensive... Just saying that you're trying to communicate like, even that sort of statement helps”.

This advice adopts both the transparency common in New Zealand communication, by directly saying how they are trying to communicate and what they do not intend in their communication, whilst indicating to the other person that they may be finding it hard to say what they need to say. This is another example of how the “enabler” supports on farm; recommending specific actions through behavioural CQ that bridges two cultural baselines.

However, without cognitive CQ, or knowledge of the barriers some Filipino face in “speaking up”, this still may not be transparent enough for the New Zealand context. Cognitive and metacognitive CQ would therefore be a valuable tool for the listener to acquire to bridge this gap and understand what this type of communication could mean – what Presbitero et al. (2025) coins as ‘Double CQ’, whereby both worker and employee have CQ.

Enabling a Safe Environment

A different kind of enabler was identified. Some participants described the importance of creating or maintaining a safe environment for relationships with another colleague or their team. One participant had identified her colleagues’ discomfort with direct communication and potential conflict and intentionally adapted not just her communication, but her behaviour, to enable trust to be built and an environment where her manager felt safe with her.

“I think just me trying to communicate, sit us together, me being nice to him, so he now feels safe with me, and he knows, you know, we won’t fight because I think they hate fight. They hate conflict”.

One manager cited being patient and calm with their team as being a key trait of leadership and to enable team members to feel safe to communicate.

“So you shouldn’t be, like, getting aggressive and all these things you need to, you know, calm down and, like, making them more comfortable”.

This suggests that creating safety by being calm and patient builds trust, which aligns to those who dislike conflict and lean towards relationship-focused trust building. Whilst the research itself learnt itself to language, Neeley et al. (2012) emphasised the importance in creating safe spaces for non-native speakers. This work, therefore, seems to transcend language and corporate cultural considerations as well.

Enabling newcomers to settle in

A strong undercurrent of “returning the favour” arose from interviews. Many of those who had migrated to New Zealand resonated with the experience and having undergone the initial period of acculturation. Several participants described undertaking seemingly small actions that enabled newcomers to settle in, such as picking them up from the airport, helping them to find transport, taking them to register a doctor or to the supermarket or introducing them to a social group.

It was not just migrants who played this role however; there were also New Zealand participants providing this support as well. These participants formed a type of enabler formed from empathy, not cultural knowledge, and a willingness to help newcomers settle in. This aligns to Berry’s (1997) description of “mutual accommodation”, whereby those in the host country also adapt in some way to support integration.

Who is an “Enabler?” and in which teams are they found?

Overall, an “enabler” is someone who creates the conditions for a multicultural team to thrive - whether by translating culture, creating a safe space to speak up, or helping newcomers settle in.

The “enablers” interviewed or described in this study appeared to be well integrated into New Zealand’s dairy industry and displayed signs of cognitive, metacognitive and behavioural CQ, as well as empathic traits. They understood the cultural values of New

Zealand and could translate them to less integrated colleagues. The role of the cultural enabler seemed entirely one directional, to support a less integrated or newly arrived migrant.

The concept seemed less relevant or not present in well-established, multicultural teams who had either worked together or been in New Zealand for a number of years. That's not to say, however, that someone exiting a monocultural team and entering a multicultural team for the first time may not require support from an enabler, or that every person on a farm would offer this kind of support to an incoming migrant. It therefore seems the enabler is a role adopted by a specific personality or found in a good team leader.

Adapting to other cultures

Some participants gave examples of how they adapted to their team – in particular, those from more masculine cultures. One participant described learning over time how to work with other cultures. She used a glass as an example to describe how she works with different team members:

"For me, I would say "Hey, can you put the glass away?" because in Argentina, it's normal. But I have to learn another way, for example, "Hey, can you help me? Because it would be useful to wash your glass..." You adapted so that they don't feel like I'm doing the order".

She also commented:

"Well with the Filipino... you pretend to them to need help, with Sri Lankan, they're calmer. You can just ask nicely. And with Kiwi, we say, "Let's go"... it's not disrespectful to be transparent. It's normal."

This displays not only emotional intelligence, but behavioural CQ, which requires both cognitive and metacognitive CQ to function - mapping the communication preference of each cultural group and adapting accordingly without losing the purpose of the message (Earley and Ang, 2003).

11.2 The Translators

For some participants where English was not their primary language, having a translator on farm who spoke both English and the same second language as another team member helped improve communication and support team dynamics.

Being bilingual was a strength of one farm manager because it enabled communication to take place in all languages of the team members on farm. This participant described that they all understood the reason why he was speaking in Welsh, which specifically avoided others feeling uncomfortable. This is important; participants had noted that where most of the team spoke one language, and just one other another language, it contributed towards feelings of exclusion and had an impact on the team's alignment.

"However, the one that did not speak as good English... because the boss was also able to speak Welsh, if there was a task that required a bit more communication, he would speak Welsh to that member of the staff. But we were all aware that that was why he was speaking Welsh. He always explained that in order for him to know this task was going to be completed correctly, he explained it in Welsh... so that no one felt uncomfortable that we were missing out on something".

This was also noted as being helpful when a people manager, such as a 2IC, manager or even the farm owner was bilingual to accommodate for someone else on the team.

Good boss – say slower, say in a different way, explain why to understand what

However, given that one of the main findings around language was that it was not English itself that posed an issue, but the New Zealand accent itself, simply slowing down, saying it in a different way, or explaining it differently was enough to enable translation. This was described by a participant below:

“One colleague, if we're standing in front of each other, and she would tell me, like, do this, and then she say it the same way, like, five times. I feel like bosses would be more used to saying it slower or in a different way, or sometimes they would explain why we do something so you can understand what we're doing.”

Making sure they understand by repeating the instruction

One participant explained the way in which she had adapted to ensure she understood what was being asked of her. This included her repeating the instruction in the way she had understood it.

“But I think they, they think they understand, but they just hear something else you know, or translate it differently, yeah. And I struggle with that as well when I start to work. So, what I do? Someone you know, give me the instructions, then I repeat it my way, how I understand it, and they confirm or not. So that's how you figure out how to how to communicate better”.

This example is Brown's (2004) closed-loop communication in action. Interestingly, this participant learnt this technique organically, indicating that working within bilingual teams promotes some participants to find solutions to adapt.

Language Acceleration

There were some participants who intentionally put themselves in positions where they could improve their English to better adapt. This included seeking English-speaking friends or working in multicultural teams where English was the spoken language. One noted:

“Because I don't know, people arrive here with no English, and now they already speak English really well, yeah.... depends how you how you circle around... I think one of the things helped me here in New Zealand, was to start to go to the pub”.

In one unique situation, one participant described how the farm he worked on helped to accelerate his language and for everyone else on the farm - by providing them all with English lessons. Not only that, but despite being a monocultural team with a cross-cultural leader, that leader then started learning Spanish to communicate with the team using their language. This showcases Brett et al.'s strategy of adapting, on both sides, to manage a successful multicultural team.

11.3 Tools and Technology

Providing team members of multicultural teams with English lessons was not the norm, however, and instead, the most common approach to enabling good communication across different languages was through technology. This is consistent with the findings of Bates (2021) and her study on multicultural teams.

WhatsApp & Translation App

WhatsApp was the most widely cited tool to enable communication across multicultural teams, enabling the team to see and relay information, copy messages into a translation app and use of pictures and diagrams to explain.

“And that's why WhatsApp groups, we send them photos and all these things, and we translate, because these days, you can instantly translate your language to other language.”

However, whilst using technology can minimise language pressures and allow the farm to function - it is an operational bridge. Trust is built on personal connection; tone and body language (Tenzer et al., 2014). Therefore, where technology is relied upon too heavily, this could hinder interpersonal relationships, team alignment and possibly exacerbate relationships between subgroups, as per the “Faultline Theory” (Lau & Murnighan, 1998).

11.4 What would help people adapt?

A number of participants made specific calls to action to support migrants adapting to New Zealand and the dairy industry. Interestingly, most of these suggestions were by the Filipino participants. These included support groups or liaison people who could help with integration or sit in difficult conversations that might take place on farm. One noted:

“I think there should for us Filipinos, there should be like a support group for assimilating to the countries, like, especially if you're planning to stay there”.

Second Language Support for ITO training

One Filipino participant observed that, given the number of Filipinos in the industry, it might be beneficial to have a Filipino feature or element of the Primary ITO course. This was as a result of him being part of the training but finding it difficult to keep up despite having a high level of English.

“When I attended the class, I was just hearing them talking, but I still need to translate it into my own language in my head. And talking a lot, and then I have information overload, and I just go read the book that I have”.

11.5 Going Forwards

Considering the ever-increasing rate of “New Kiwis” into Canterbury's dairy workforce, and the understanding that many people are motivated to move to New Zealand to bring their families and raise their children here, the next decade may bring a new type of enabler and translator. Children of first-generation new Kiwis often sit within the remit of the enabler and the translator. Whether or not these children decide to work in dairy is a question for another research paper, yet if they do, they are uniquely placed to operate as the translator and enabler for many incoming “New Kiwis”.

12. Discussion

With over a third of Canterbury's dairy workforce from overseas, this research has established that multicultural teams are now integral to the region's dairy industry; they are the norm rather than the exception. However, there is a difference between a team that functions operationally and a team that thrives as a cohesive unit.

This section bridges the reality of multicultural teams in Canterbury's dairy industry with the literature on what helps multicultural teams succeed, to recommend actions that would support teams to thrive. While the region is unique in its diversity, the frictions and challenges it faces are no different to any other global multicultural team. This means strategies from the wider literature can be adapted and applied through a dairy lens.

Before these recommendations are explored, however, the structural foundations of the farm must be considered. Literature cites the importance of flexible rosters, sufficient staffing, fair wages and appropriate working hours, which was reiterated by several participants (DairyNZ, 2022; Crouch, 2021). In describing when the team worked poorly together, many responses in this research alluded to structural factors, like long working days, which increased pressure and exacerbated cultural and language challenges on farm. What presents as cultural friction may, in fact, be a symptom of a structural problem and should be investigated as such before it is addressed as cultural.

1. Recruitment

Recruitment shapes cultural composition of the team, regardless of whether it is intentional or not. Strategies for managing a multicultural team are explored below.

- One of the farms in this study considered English proficiency and a willingness to fit in, alongside dairy skill during recruitment. This worked alongside management of the mix of languages on the team, so no group of the same first-language speakers clustered together. This kept English as the working language and stopping communication splitting into subgroups, which Lau and Murnighan (1998) call 'Faultline Theory'. Given the power of linguistic ostracism, and its associated impact on the minority language, encouraging and enabling English to be the working language supports better team cohesion and fewer negative emotions (Dotan-Eliaz et al., 2009). Brett et al. (2006) call this structural intervention, where shaping team composition is actively done through recruitment to minimise friction from the start.
- A "personality over culture" approach was another successful strategy used. Not only did the participant recruit for dairy required characteristics, including being hard-working, willingness to learn and initiative, but included considering traits which Earley and Ang (2003) call motivational cultural intelligence: the drive to engage with and learn about other cultures. Literature links this openness to people who adapt more easily to a new cultures and could work better in multicultural teams (Schmitz & Schmitz, 2022).
- Pairing of team members with the same language can help the team member with the lower English proficiency, however, can also contribute to sub-groups, or faultlines, forming in the team. Where ethnicity factored into the faultline, this generally negative impacted the team (Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Bezrukova et al., 2009).

2. Expectation

In a multicultural team, there will likely be different perceptions of "normal". This depends on the individual, their personality, where they are from, what their normal looks like, how well they have integrated or been in New Zealand (Hofstede, 2001; Meyer, 2014).

- A manager should communicate the baseline of the team culture, rather than assuming a new team already knows or will figure it out (Brett et al., 2006). What is the expectation of the team? How do you expect the team to communicate and how is conflict handled?
- The earlier in the season these are set, the better. One farm set their expectation around the farm's flat hierarchy, "everyone helps everyone" mentality as early as recruitment. This is a strategy many other successful multicultural teams adopt, called "managerial intervention" (Brett et al., 2006).
- Once communicated, it is important to follow through on what was said. "*Speak up, you won't get in trouble*" only holds if speaking up is genuinely safe every time - otherwise this can impact trust and interpersonal relationships on farm. Numerous participants noted that trust was lost when their managers said one thing yet did not action it or adapt their behaviour to do it. In worst case scenarios, this caused resentment and sometimes, prompted participants to leave their role.

3. Culture

The dairy industry acknowledges that leadership, treating staff as the farm's greatest asset and "knowing your people" are central to team performance (DairyNZ, 2024c). This research argues that cultural understanding is simply an extension of that - knowing not only your people, but the cultural baseline they work from.

- Literature emphasises that when a leader adapts as well as the team to their leader, multicultural teams perform better (Brett et al., 2006; Presbitero et al., 2025).
- What might look like not caring, may be a response to hierarchy, *hiya*, or conflict through a different cultural frame (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).
- Start with understanding your team's culture and adjusting how you lead to bridge the operational requirement of farm with the cultural baseline your team is working from (Brett et al., 2006).
- A leader can assess their own cultural intelligence by considering these questions (Earley & Ang, 2003; Van Dyne et al., 2008):
 - **Drive** - do I want to learn about my team's cultures?
 - **Knowledge** - do I understand the baselines they work from?
 - **Strategy** - can I read a situation and plan how to adjust?
 - **Action** - do I actually change how I behave?

4. Language

There is power in language, especially when you are a non-native speaker. It shapes relationships, how someone is made to feel, and whether they come to trust or resent you (Tenzer et al., 2014). Both the literature and participants were clear on how non-native speakers can be supported by a manager, and by others in the team.

- Slow down, say it a different way, and explain why. The barrier was often accent, not English itself (Neeley et al., 2012).
- Check understanding by asking a colleague to repeat the instruction back, rather than relying on a "yes" (Brown, 2004).
- Depending on the proficiency of a team, consider how they can be supported in learning English. One farm in this study provided the team with English lessons, and the leader learned some Spanish in return.
- If it is frustrating for you, it is likely frustrating, stressful or to cause anxiety for them. Be patient, calm and encourage empathy across the team (Neeley et al., 2012).

5. Trust and Safety

Trust is the foundation of a cohesive team, and both language and culture shape how it forms. Where either is a barrier, trust is harder to build. Speaking up was enabled by trust, one of the most significant cultural differences noted across multicultural teams.

- Trust is built differently across cultures, for example through personal connection over time in Filipino and Latin American cultures (Meyer, 2014). Know which your team builds on and invest accordingly.
- Recognising that culture and language can both hold speaking up back is vital. For a worker carrying *hiya*, a core Filipino value, questioning a figure of authority can feel like risking embarrassment (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). It can also come from language - a non-native speaker with low confidence in their English may stay quiet rather than struggle to be understood.
- Recognise the weight of visa insecurity. For some, speaking up can feel like risking the job a visa depends on, especially when the ease of access and sacrifice was harder, or family has been brought to New Zealand.

6. Enablers and Translators

An enabler is someone who helps explain cultural expectation to newcomers, enables safe environments to be built and supports newcomers to settle in. They played a pivotal role for many in the early stages of moving to New Zealand and to supporting people to integrate better into the region and teams.

- Identifying whether there is an enabler on farm will help identify if there is a team member undertaking an unrecognised role, or whether there is a gap to be bridged on a team.
- Recognising the enabler role in multicultural teams can encourage its deliberate use in recruitment and team building.

Going forwards, where the children of "New Kiwis" enter the dairy industry, they may be uniquely positioned to offer both the enabler and translator role on farms.

Woven throughout these recommendations is the concept of mutual accommodation (Berry, 1997). Adapted to managing a multicultural team, it translates to both a leader and the team adapting to bridge differences (Brett et al., 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003).

The enablers in this study were already doing exactly this. They bridge the gap between a worker's culture and what the farm needed, often without recognition or any formal role. They are among the most culturally intelligent people in the industry, and they warrant being recognised as such.

As Canterbury's workforce has changed, so have its people. Without being able to name or reason why, a large proportion of participants had been able to adapt and work with those from different cultures - becoming increasingly culturally intelligent in the process.

Together, this research challenges the attitude that *"they moved here, so it is their responsibility to adapt"* - an attitude unlikely to build a cohesive, high-performing team in an environment where multicultural teams are the norm and no longer the exception.

Looking ahead: the Indian workforce

Indian participants feature little in this report thus far. They were only occasionally mentioned when considering cultural differences, which is interesting, given they sit at the opposite end of the cultural frameworks from New Zealand, alongside Filipino workers who featured heavily. Part of the explanation may be integration: the Indian participants interviewed were university-educated and arrived with strong English, and appeared to integrate more quickly than some other groups. This is consistent with this study's finding that English proficiency is central to both integration and progression.

This part of the workforce is considered specifically in this discussion because when participants were asked who they expected to see going forwards in Canterbury's dairy workforce, it was Indian workers who were most often named. Several, including those with oversight of large-scale operations, observed Indian workers increasingly moving into senior roles and pursuing contract milking, self-employment and, ultimately, ownership - an ambition echoed and achieved by the Indian participants themselves.

The increase in the Indian population may be supported through immigration policy. The New Zealand - India Free Trade Agreement, signed in April 2026, is expected to introduce a working holiday route of up to 1,000 places, which is a lower barrier than the student-visa route most Indian participants described. Given India's population of 1.4 billion, however, 1,000 places is an incredibly small percentage of the population, and there is no certainty that those arriving on this visa will choose dairy over other sectors. However, with Indian workers already establishing themselves and progressing toward ownership, dairy is a logical choice for new arrivals: there is an existing community to join, and clear evidence that progression is possible.

Despite Indian and Filipino workers sitting close together on cultural frameworks, the experiences described here suggest the two groups are less alike in practice than the frameworks imply. This acts as a reminder that proximity on a graph does not equate to similarity on farm (McSweeney, 2002).

What this might mean for team composition is less clear. Given the collectivist nature of Indian culture and the role of networks in recruitment, a growing Indian workforce could lead to more network-built, predominantly Indian teams. Given this research has identified teams made up of the same ethnicity are likely to have reduced language and cultural friction, given a shared first language and cultural baseline, this could be seen. However, the study found no consistent pattern to confirm this: among the Indian participants, one contract milker led a culturally diverse team while another farm owner led an all-Indian one.

13. Limitations

Ethnic Role Distribution

This research would have been enhanced by understanding the relationship between occupation and ethnicity. If not possible through StatsNZ Census data, this should be collected and analysed through a DairyNZ Work Survey.

Generalisation

Interviewing four people from one ethnicity living and working in Canterbury's dairy industry does not capture the full range of thoughts and perspectives within that ethnic group.

Country Level Cultural Analysis

As within any country, there are often multiple cultures, meaning a country-level comparison aggregates a country's many cultures into one. This must be considered when interpreting these results.

Non-Native Speaker Bias

The participants of this study all had good proficiency in English. This research does not capture those with lower English proficiency, who are arguably most affected by the findings described above. In line with the finding that technology is an operational tool to bridge mixed proficiency on farm, a survey (translated into a participant's first language) may have been better placed to enable lower-proficiency speakers to contribute.

14. Conclusion

Canterbury is the most ethnically diverse region in New Zealand's dairy industry. With more than a third of its workforce arriving from overseas, the multicultural team is now the norm rather than the exception. The question Canterbury's dairy industry now faces is no longer whether its teams are diverse, but how well they are led.

Drawing on census data from 2013 to 2023 and the experiences of 32 participants from fourteen countries, this research set out to understand how that diversity shapes team dynamics. It mapped who makes up the workforce, traced the pathways and motivations that brought them into dairy, and examined the cultural differences and language barriers that surface on farm. Read against a defined New Zealand cultural baseline, these differences are not simply friction to be managed but a reality to be understood - what looks like a lack of initiative or a reluctance to speak up is often a different cultural frame, shaped by hierarchy, hiya, language confidence, or the weight of visa insecurity.

What separates a team that merely functions from one that thrives is adaptation on both sides. The strongest teams in this study were not those that asked migrants to simply fit in, but those where leaders extended the industry's existing belief in "knowing your people" to include the cultural baseline their people work from. Running quietly through this are the enablers and translators - the people who bridge the gap between a worker's culture and what the farm needs, usually without recognition or any formal role. They are among the most culturally intelligent people in the industry, and they deserve to be recognised as such.

In a workforce where multicultural teams are the norm, the work ahead is not to erase cultural difference but to embrace it, be curious, be adaptable and learn how to lead across it. It is this that will strengthen our industry and enable our multicultural teams to thrive.

15. Recommendations and Next Steps

15.1 For Managers

1. Check the structural basics first

- Consider rosters, staffing and hours before treating friction as a "culture problem".

2. Recruitment shapes your team, whether you mean it to or not

- Recognise that recruitment influences whether culture and language friction occurs on farm
- There are proven strategies for composing teams to minimise friction and encourage excellence. Explore whether these can work for you during recruitment.

3. Set expectations early

- Define and communicate your team culture. Do not assume people know your "normal", especially if they are not from New Zealand.
- Make it clear how you expect people to communicate and how conflict is handled, as early as possible.
- If you say "speak up, you won't get in trouble", your actions must match.

4. Culture is just an extension of knowing your people – and yourself

- Notice the everyday signals: people not speaking up, staff calling you "sir" or "madam", people responding differently to conflict.
- If you spot a behaviour, don't assume, but be curious. Consider - 'why?' Ask "is this personality, culture, or something else?"
- Consider – what do you consider culturally acceptable? What cultural lens are you looking through? If you can't explicitly state what ways of communicating and behaving are normal in New Zealand, don't expect colleagues from overseas to be able to see them, adopt them and align to them the moment they arrive.

5. Assess your own cultural intelligence (CQ). The more of these you can do, the better you can lead a multicultural team:

- **Drive** - do I want to learn about my team's cultures?
- **Knowledge** - do I understand the baselines I work from and what my team works from?
- **Strategy** - can I read a situation and plan how to adjust how I communicate or behave?
- **Action** - do I change how I behave towards different colleagues?

6. Language: small changes from you make a big difference

- Slow down, say it a different way, and explain why. Often it is the accent, not their English.
- Check understanding by getting them to repeat it back. Do not rely on a "yes".
- Support English learning where you can. Hosting at local schools and village halls could reduce barriers to entry.

- Be patient. If it is frustrating for you, it is worse for them.

7. Trust and safety let people speak up

- Different cultures build trust differently. Know how your team builds trust and invest accordingly.
- Recognise that culture, language and visa insecurity can all stop someone speaking up.

8. Find and value your enablers and translators

- An enabler is someone on farm who creates the conditions for a multicultural team to thrive
- Consider: do I have an enabler? If I am not translating cultural expectations, who is?
- Recognise the role, and if no one else does it, you are the enabler.
- A bilingual manager can be a real asset, as a bilingual team member can also be – though managing ‘faultline’ groups from forming should be considered.
- Do it yourself if no one else can. Where there is no enabler, the manager is. Refer to the CQ questions above as a starting point.

9. Lean on tech, but know its limit

- WhatsApp, translation apps and photos enable operational success, but trust still comes from face-to-face connection.

10. Adaption is a winning strategy to manage multicultural teams

- Adaptation goes both ways. *"They moved here, so it's on them"* is only going to get you so far and is unlikely to enable a highly performing multicultural team. Challenge your preconceptions. Get curious. Do better.

15.2 For Industry

DairyNZ

- Undertake applied research investigating multicultural team management with the aim of developing a module for managing multicultural teams
- Understand which ethnicities occupy what roles. This will support the development of training for leaders of multicultural teams.

Primary ITO – Dairy Courses:

- Explore an adjacent course tailored to, and available for, second-language speakers
- Alternatively, adjust the existing courses to consider non-native speakers.

National Trade Academy

- All participants from the Philippines enter the dairy industry via a National Training Academy course. They all identified cultural differences when they entered the industry. This suggests that the current training, if any, on cultural acculturation should be revisited and expanded.
- Expanding on the enabler concept, new entrants could be buddied up with a previous graduate to support integration and who could help clarify cultural expectation in New Zealand.

References

- Alam, A., Nel, E., Hill, D., & Bulloch, H. (2023). Settling in New Zealand's small towns: Experiences of minority ethnic immigrants. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 24(4), 1079 - 1101. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01044-6>
- Al-Naemi, M., Lee, H.-J., & Reade, C. (2025). The unexpected upside of high language diversity: Social integration through language advice networks. *Journal of Management*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063251337067>
- Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., & Rockstuhl, T. (2015). Cultural intelligence: Origins, conceptualization, evolution, and methodological diversity. In M. J. Gelfand, C.-Y. Chiu, & Y.-Y. Hong (Eds.), *Handbook of advances in culture and psychology* (pp. 273–323). Oxford University Press.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013). *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)* (Version 1.2). <https://www.abs.gov.au/...>
- Bates, M. (2021). *How do we successfully manage multicultural teams in the agriculture sector?* Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme.
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 5–34.
- Bezrukova, K., Jehn, K. A., Zanutto, E. L., & Thatcher, S. M. B. (2009). Do workgroup faultlines help or hurt? A moderated model of faultlines, team identification, and group performance. *Organization Science*, 20(1), 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1080.0379>
- Brett, J., Behfar, K., & Kern, M. C. (2006). Managing multicultural teams. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(11), 84–91.
- Brown, J. P. (2004). Closing the communication loop: Using readback/hear back to support patient safety. *Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Safety*, 30(8), 460–464. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1549-3741\(04\)30053-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1549-3741(04)30053-5)
- Central Statistics Office. (2024). *Livestock farm structure survey 2023*. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-fss/farmstructuresurvey2023/livestock/>
- Collins, F. L., & Bayliss, T. (2020). The good migrant: Everyday nationalism and temporary migration management on New Zealand dairy farms. *Political Geography*, 80, 102193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102193>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Crouch, J. (2021). *How can the NZ dairy industry design workplaces to attract the best of the next generation into our workforce?* Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme. https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Crouch-Jordyn_How-can-the-NZ-dairy-industry-design-workplaces-to-attract-the-best-of-the-next-generation_K43-1.pdf
- DairyNZ. (2021). *Submission to the Primary Production Select Committee: Inquiry into the future of the workforce needs in the primary industries of New Zealand [Submission]*. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/wotpehmp/dairynz-submission-workforce-needs.pdf>
- DairyNZ. (2024a). *Attracting people to dairy*. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/regulation/advocacy/attracting-people-to-dairy/>

- DairyNZ. (2024b). Immigration. Retrieved March 29, 2026, from <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/people/finding-and-employing-good-people/immigration/>
- DairyNZ. (2024c). Leading a great team. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/people/building-a-great-team/leading-a-great-team/>
- DairyNZ. (2026a, February). *State of the dairy nation pulse report*. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/oyafcwgj/state-of-the-dairy-nation-pulse-report-feb-2026.pdf>
- DairyNZ. (2026b). *People-first leadership lifts performance* [Inside Dairy]. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/news/people-first-leadership-lifts-performance/>
- Dotan-Eliaz, O., Sommer, K. L., & Rubin, Y. S. (2009). Multilingual groups: Effects of linguistic ostracism on felt rejection and anger, coworker attraction, perceived team potency, and creative performance. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 31(4), 363–375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973530903317177>
- Dynes, R. A., Burggraaf, V. T., Goulter, C. G., & Dalley, D. E. (2010). Canterbury farming: Production, processing and farming systems. *Proceedings of the New Zealand Grassland Association*, 72, I–VIII.
- Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford Business Book.
- Enriquez, V. G. (1978). Kapwa: A core concept in Filipino social psychology. *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 42(1-4), 100-108.
- Fariña, S. R., & Chilibroste, P. (2019). Opportunities and challenges for the growth of milk production from pasture: The case of farm systems in Uruguay. *Agricultural Systems*, 176, 102631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2019.06.001>
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.
- Goodman, L. A. (1961). Snowball sampling. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 32(1), 148–170. <https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177705148>
- Gumulya, W. (2020). *Cultural intelligence (CQ) for not-for-profit organisations*. Better Boards. <https://betterboards.net/relationships/cultural-intelligence-for-not-for-profit-organisations/>
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher positionality - A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research - A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232>
- Immigration New Zealand. (2025). *Post study work visa*. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/visas/post-study-work-visa/>
- Immigration New Zealand. (2026). *Accredited Employer Work Visa*. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/visas/accredited-employer-work-visa/>

Immigration New Zealand. (2026). Who can apply for a working holiday visa. Retrieved May 22, 2026, from <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/work/working-holiday-visas/who-can-apply-for-a-working-holiday-visa/>

Immigration New Zealand. (n.d.). Green List roles - jobs we need people for in New Zealand. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/work/requirements-for-work-visas/green-list-occupations-qualifications-and-skills/green-list-roles-jobs-we-need-people-for-in-new-zealand/>

Jang, S. (2017). Cultural brokerage and creative performance in multicultural teams. *Organization Science*, 28(6), 993–1009. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2017.1162>

Kambutu, J., Edwards, P., & Bicknell, K. (2024). Navigating integration challenges: Insights from migrant dairy farm workers in New Zealand. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 112, 103454. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103454>

Kircher, R., & Zipp, L. (2022). *Research Methods in Language Attitudes*. Cambridge University Press.

Kyte, R. (2007). *A different approach to staffing in the dairy industry*. Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme. https://ruralleaders.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Kellogg_Rural_Leadership_Programme_NZ_Richard_Kyte_2007.pdf

Lau, D. C., & Murnighan, J. K. (1998). Demographic diversity and faultlines: The compositional dynamics of organizational groups. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 325–340. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1998.533229>

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Livemore, D. (2011). *The cultural intelligence difference: Master the one skill you can't do without in today's global economy*. AMACOM.

Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) & DairyNZ. (2023). *New Zealand dairy statistics 2022–23*. DairyNZ. <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/resources/resource-list/new-zealand-dairy-statistics-2022-23/>

Lueck, K., & Wilson, M. (2010). Acculturative stress in Asian immigrants: The impact of social and linguistic factors. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(1), 47–57.

McKay, F. (2022). Communication. In *New Zealand culture*. The Cultural Atlas. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/new-zealand-culture/new-zealand-culture-communication>

McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith - a failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55(1), 89–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726702055001602>

Ministry for Primary Industries. (2025). *Situation and outlook for primary industries: December 2025*. New Zealand Government. <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/70984-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-December-2025>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (n.d.). *New Zealand–India Free Trade Agreement summary*. New Zealand Government. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Trade-agreements/NZ-India-FTA/New-Zealand-India-Free-Trade-Agreement-Summary.pdf>

Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A step-by-step process of thematic analysis to develop a conceptual model in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>

Neeley, T. B. (2013). Language matters: Status loss and achieved status distinctions in global organizations. *Organization Science*, 24(2), 476–497.

Neeley, T. B., Hinds, P. J., & Cramton, C. D. (2012). The (un)hidden turmoil of language in global collaboration. *Organizational Dynamics*, 41(3), 236–244.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.03.008>

New Zealand Immigration. 2025. New Zealand and Iceland to explore working holiday scheme. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/news-centre/new-zealand-and-iceland-to-explore-working-holiday-scheme/>

Pangborn, M. C., & Woodford, K. B. (2011). *Canterbury dairying: A study in land use change and increasing production*. Lincoln University Agricultural Management Group.
<https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/server/api/core/bitstreams/a52eb750-7a40-40d2-9312-d01054450551/content>

Pe-Pua, R., & Protacio-Marcelino, E. A. (2000). Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 3(1), 49–71.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00054>

Presbitero, A., Fujimoto, Y., & Lim, W. M. (2025). Employee engagement and retention in multicultural work groups: The interplay of employee and supervisory cultural intelligence. *Journal of Business Research*, 186, 115012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115012>

Roller, M. R., & Lavrakas, P. J. (2015). *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach*. Guilford Press.

Rural News Group. (2020, March 3). *Campaign to make farmers better bosses*. Dairy News.
<https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/dairy-news/dairy-general-news/campaign-to-make-farmers-better-bosses>

Schmitz, P. G., & Schmitz, F. (2022). Correlates of acculturation strategies: Personality, coping, and outcome. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 53(7–8), 875–916.

Separa, L. A. C., Croucher, S. M., Hodis, G. M., & Feekery, A. (2025). The influence of host receptivity and conformity pressure on the intercultural transformation of Filipino migrants in New Zealand. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 105, 102128.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102128>

Smits, K. (2019). Multiculturalism, biculturalism, and national identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In R. Ashcroft & M. Bevir (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on the theory and practice of multiculturalism: Lessons from the Commonwealth* (pp. 104–111). University of California Press.

Source: Meyer, E. (2014). The culture map country mapping tool. Retrieved from
<https://erinmeyer.com/tools/culture-map>

Statistics New Zealand. (2005). *Statistical standard for ethnicity 2005*. Statistics New Zealand.
<https://statsnz.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/collection/p20045coll1/id/3700/download>

Stats NZ. (2021). *Ethnicity (information about this variable and its quality)*. Stats NZ DataInfo+. <https://datainfoplus.stats.govt.nz/Item/nz.govt.stats/7079024d-6231-4fc4-824f-dd8515d33141>

Stats NZ. (n.d.). *Ethnicity - 2023 Census: Information by concept*. DataInfo+. Retrieved May 18, 2026, from <https://datainfoplus.stats.govt.nz/Item/nz.govt.stats/1f1ca131-a9aa-483b-98ab-d22bf84ae944>

The Culture Factor Group. (2026). *Country comparison tool*. <https://www.theculturefactor.com/country-comparison-tool>

Tipples, R., Rawlinson, P., & Greenhalgh, J. (2012). Vulnerability in New Zealand dairy farming: The case of Filipino migrants. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 37(3), 24.

Tipples, R., Trafford, S., & Callister, P. (2010). *The factors which have resulted in migrant workers being "essential" workers on New Zealand dairy farms* [Paper presentation]. Labour, Employment and Work Conference 2010, Wellington, New Zealand. <https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/LEW/article/view/1710>

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. (2023). *Dairy and products annual: India* (Report No. IN2023-0072). <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Dairy+and+Products+Annual+New+Delhi+India+IN2023-0072.pdf>

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service. (2024). *Dairy and products annual: Philippines* (Report No. RP2024-0038). <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Dairy+and+Products+Annual+Manila+Philippines+RP2024-0038.pdf>

Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Koh, C. (2008). Development and validation of the CQS: The Cultural Intelligence Scale. In S. Ang & L. Van Dyne (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural intelligence: Theory, measurement, and applications* (pp. 16–38). M. E. Sharpe.

van Oudenhoven, J. P., & Ward, C. (2013). Fading majority cultures: The implications of transnationalism and demographic changes for immigrant acculturation. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 23(2), 81–97.

Wallace, D. F. (2009). *This is water: Some thoughts, delivered on a significant occasion, about living a compassionate life*. Little, Brown and Company.

Walrond, C. (2015). *Filipinos*. Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/filipinos>

Wang, K. T., & Goh, M. (2020). Cultural intelligence. In B. J. Carducci & C. S. Nave (Eds.), *The Wiley encyclopaedia of personality and individual differences: Clinical, applied, and cross-cultural research* (pp. 269–273). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118970843.ch310>

WHV Immigration New Zealand. (n.d.). *Student visas*. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/study/study-visas/>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Meyer's Culture Map Dimension Explored

Communicating

Low-Context	High-Context
Good communication is precise, simple and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.	Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

Evaluating

Direct Negative Feedback	Indirect Negative Feedback
Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptions are often used when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.	Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

Leading

Egalitarian	Hierarchical
The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.	The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

Trusting

Task-based	Relationship-based
Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.	Trust is built through sharing emails, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

Disagreeing

Confrontational	Avoids Confrontation
Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.	Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

Meyer (2014).

Appendix 2 – Cleaning Census Data

Data source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings, customised dataset for 2013, 2018, and 2023, providing Level 3 ethnicity.

Cleaning steps:

- Saved a working copy of each raw CSV file to preserve the original data
- Used Find & Replace to replace all instances of "..C" (Stats NZ confidential counts) with 0
- Confirmed row 1 contained correct column headers, removing any Stats NZ title rows above them

Pivot table construction:

- Inserted a PivotTable from the full dataset
- Placed Ethnicity Label in Rows, "RegionalCouncilLabel" in Columns, and Count in Values
- Changed the value field setting from Count to Sum

Filters applied:

- Occupation: filtered to two ANZSCO codes only - "Dairy cattle farmer" and "Dairy cattle farm worker"
- Age: filtered to "Total" only (to avoid double-counting across age bands)
- Gender: filtered to "Total" only (to avoid double-counting across gender)
- Region: filtered as necessary e.g. to Canterbury, Southland, Waikato, Taranaki, Manawatū-Whanganui, and West Coast

Percentage conversion:

- Right clicked any value in the pivot table and selected Show Values As % of Column Total, so each region's column summed to 100%

Row cleanup:

- Removed from the pivot table: "Total, Grand Total, Total stated, Don't Know, Not Stated, Refused to Answer, Response Outside Scope, and Response Unidentifiable"

Validation:

- For regional comparison - Canterbury 2023 percentages were cross-checked against a previously cleaned and validated version of the same dataset to confirm filters were correctly applied

Comparison with National Statistics

To undertake a comparison with DairyNZ's national data on the composition of the workforce, nationalities were grouped per the Level 1 Ethnic Data categories.

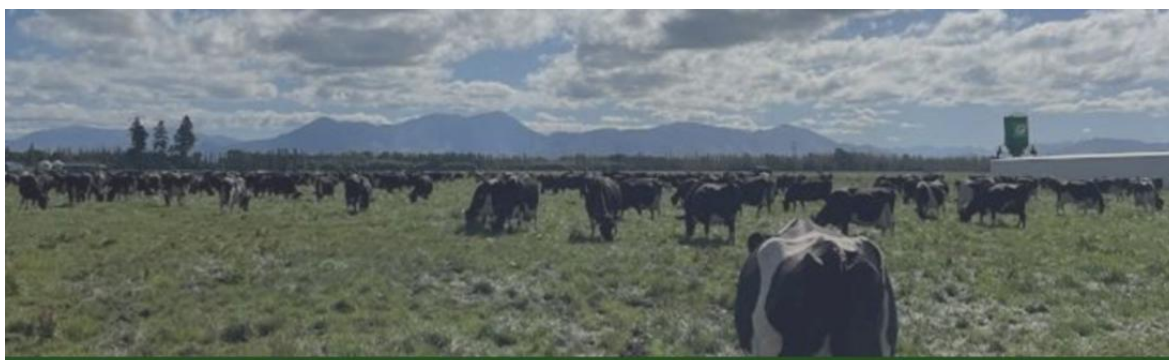
Group	Includes
European	New Zealand European, British and Irish, Other European, European nfd, Dutch, German, Australian
Asian	Filipino, Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Asian nfd, Other Asian, Southeast Asian nfd, Other Southeast Asian
Māori	Māori
MELAA	Middle Eastern, African, Latin American
Pasifika	Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Islands Māori
Other Ethnicity	Other Ethnicity

(Stats NZ, 2005)

Appendix 3 - Interview Questions

- What's your role on the farm?
- Where are you from?
- How long have you been in New Zealand? How long in dairy?
- Tell me about your team - who works here, where are they from?
- How would you define a good team?
- Tell me about a time your team worked well together
- What surprised you when you started in NZ dairy?
- How is working here different from your home country?
- How does culture factor into your team?
- Do you work differently with certain team member? If so, who and how?
- What have you learned about working with people from different backgrounds?
- What does your manager do that works well?
- Tell me about a time the team didn't work well together
- What helps your team work together?
- What have you experienced over your time in dairy?
- What do you expect going forwards?

Appendix 4 – Participant Information Sheet



Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme – Research Project

Cultural Diversity in Canterbury's Dairy Workforce

If you work in Canterbury dairy in a culturally diverse team - whether you're a New Zealander, a Filipino, Indian, Nepali, Irish, South American or from anywhere else in the world – I would love to hear from you!

About this research

Canterbury's dairy workforce is made up of people from many different cultural backgrounds. This research aims to understand what makes culturally diverse dairy teams thrive, identify challenges that might arise and understand how teams overcome them.

Who would I like to hear from

- Farm workers
- Farm managers and team leaders

What's involved

- One interview (approx. 30 minutes)
- At a time and place that suits you
- Feel free to bring a family member, colleague or friend
- Questions available in a language of your choice beforehand

Your privacy

- Your privacy is important
- Interviews are confidential and all details will remain anonymous
- You can stop at anytime

Why your voice matters

This is an exploratory study, so there are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to capture the experiences of those working in Canterbury dairy who have come from another country, or who work within a culturally diverse team, and develop practical recommendations to help you and your team thrive.



Hi, I'm Kate! I'm based in Mid-Canterbury. If you would like to take part, contact me:



KELLOGG
RURAL LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME

Growing
tomorrow's
leaders



Mackenzie
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Appendix 5 – Participant Consent Form



KELLOGG
RURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME
A PROGRAMME BY RURAL LEADERS



LINCOLN
UNIVERSITY
TE WHARE WĀNAKA O AORAKI

MGMT 631 and the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme

Research Information & Consent Form for Interviews

I would like to invite you to participate in a project entitled ***"An Exploratory Study of Cultural Diversity in Canterbury's Dairy Workforce"***

This research explores the cultural diversity of dairy teams in Canterbury.

If people want to be part of the project, they need to currently or have recently worked within the dairy industry and be over the age of 18.

If you wish to be part of this project, I will invite you to have an interview with me (Kate Tomlinson) that will last about 30 – 45 minutes, at your place of business or other neutral location that you are comfortable in. The interview will be more like a conversation, and the questions will be about your perspectives and experiences. With your permission, I will record the interview and transcribe for analysis and use in the project.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you don't have to answer any question if you don't want to. You can withdraw from the project, including withdrawing any information you have provided, up to 1st May 2026 by contacting me or my Course Examiner (Craig Trotter) via the emails below.

The results of the project will be published on the Kellogg Rural Leaders website and may be published in an academic journal or presented at a conference. However, you may be assured of your anonymity: your identity will not be made public or made known to any person other than the Human Ethics Committee in the event of an audit. To ensure confidentiality, your interview data will only be seen by me and will be stored in an electronic form with password protection. Only aggregated data will be presented in any publications, and no information will be reported in a way that might identify you as an individual.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee (HEC2026-10). If you have any questions about participating in the project, please contact me or my Course Examiner; we would be happy to discuss any concerns you have.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project!

Kate Tomlinson

Course Examiner: Dr Craig Trotter, Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce

Consent

1. I have read and understood the description of the project above.
2. I have been given enough time to consider whether or not to participate in the project and to ask questions.
3. I have been given a copy of this Research Information and Consent Form to keep.
4. I understand that I may withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided, up to 1st May 2026 by contacting Kate Tomlinson or her Course Examiner.

☐ I consent to participate in the project.

☐ I consent to publication of the results (which may include my anonymised information).

☐ I consent to having an audio recording made of my interview.

☐ I do not consent to having an audio recording made of my interview but agree to notes being made.

Name:

Signed:

Date: _____

Please return this form to Kate Tomlinson

Appendix 6 – Additional demographic details of participants

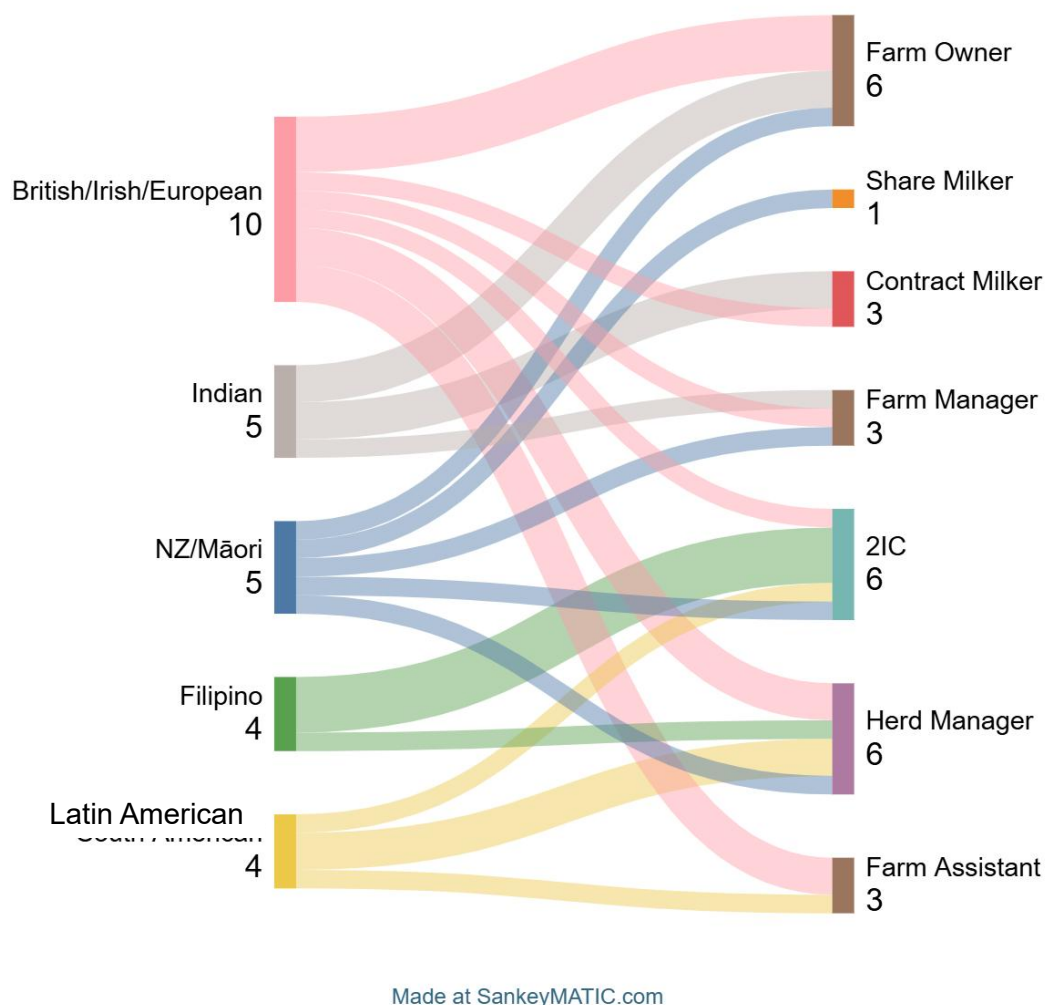


Figure 22 Ethnicity and Role of Participants

Herd Size

The median number of cows on farm was 1,200, ranging from 640 – 3,300. This is larger than the cited regional average number of cows on farm.

Team Size

Team sizes ranged from 3 to 17, with a median of 6, excluding one participant who had approximately 60 staff across multiple farm operations.

Migration

For those who migrated to New Zealand, the majority arrived between 2019 and 2025. A handful arrived between 1980s – 2010. Whilst this may be a characteristic of those interviewed, it also aligns with the post-COVID19 labour shortage in dairy and consequential increase in many ethnicities migrating to New Zealand to join the industry.

The majority of those participants who had migrated to New Zealand held permanent residency, or residency. 7 held Working Visas or Working Holiday Visas.

Appendix 7 – Regional Ethnic Breakdown (2023)

	Canterbury	Manawatū-Whanganui	Southland	Taranaki	Waikato	West Coast
New Zealand European	57.27%	74.81%	58.46%	83.19%	70.22%	77.25%
Filipino	15.58%	6.50%	18.40%	2.69%	4.56%	4.31%
Māori	6.63%	13.10%	7.15%	9.08%	12.13%	11.63%
Latin American	3.50%	0.00%	1.62%	0.36%	0.49%	0.00%
Indian	3.35%	0.43%	2.63%	0.18%	3.44%	1.05%
British and Irish	2.62%	0.82%	1.30%	0.78%	1.42%	1.18%
Other European	2.11%	0.58%	1.34%	0.99%	1.27%	1.57%
Other Asian	1.41%	0.00%	1.55%	0.00%	0.28%	0.52%
Asian nfd	1.32%	1.01%	1.95%	0.27%	0.62%	0.00%
Other Ethnicity	1.08%	0.96%	1.12%	1.37%	0.88%	1.96%
Sri Lankan	0.99%	0.00%	0.97%	0.00%	0.28%	0.00%
Dutch	0.92%	0.63%	2.06%	0.51%	1.27%	0.00%
Southeast Asian nfd	0.73%	0.58%	0.65%	0.00%	0.45%	0.00%
Fijian	0.68%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00%
Other	1.80%	0.58%	0.79%	0.60%	2.48%	0.52%

Adapted from: Ethnicity Level 3 Data, Stats NZ (2023)

*Other includes Australian, European nfd, African, Chinese, Cook Islands Māori, Other Southeast Asian, Tongan, German, Samoan, Vietnamese, Niuean, Tokelauan, Polish, Japanese, South Slav, Other Pacific Peoples, Italian, Korean, Pacific Peoples nfd, Greek, Cambodian, and Middle Eastern.