

# 1. PEOPLE



Dairy farming is about people. It is the people who make the decisions, do the work, and make farming successful and enjoyable – and our dairy farms need to be enjoyable, safe and rewarding places for them to work.

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A great on-farm work environment is built on a solid foundation created by complying with the law. On top of that, the five pillars of good practice shown above, work together to create an environment attracting and keeping the motivated and talented people the industry needs.

For practical tools, tips and resources for good people management visit [dairynz.co.nz/people](https://dairynz.co.nz/people)

## Career development

Many people progress through the industry following a logical progression pathway.

The dairy industry has an agreed set of role definitions that describe the experience, skills, level of supervision, knowledge and attributes expected in the five key on-farm role categories, along with opportunities for training. For more detail, visit [dairynz.co.nz/roles](https://dairynz.co.nz/roles)

## Dairy industry standard roles

### Farm assistant

- New entrant onwards
- Generally under full supervision
- Assists with day-to-day tasks on-farm, including feeding, milk harvesting, animal health and environmental management.

### Herd manager

- At least 2 years on-farm experience
- Requires limited supervision
- Completes day-to-day tasks on-farm, often taking responsibility for the running of the dairy shed and other routine tasks.

### Assistant manager

- 3-4 years on-farm experience
- Requires minimal supervision
- Assists with the management of day-to-day activities linked to farm production. Implements farm policies and plans, including day-to-day planning and staff management in the absence of the farm manager/owner.

### Farm manager

- Minimum 5 years on-farm experience
- Operates with minimal input from owner
- Responsible for meeting farm goals, including all aspects of production, stock, environmental and staff management. Should be involved in the budgeting process but will not set the budget.

### Business/operations manager

- 5 years or more experience on-farm
- Operates independently with occasional reporting on progress to a board
- Responsible for meeting overall business goals. Leading farm management including the areas of planning, budgeting, targets and resource requirements. May be responsible for multiple farms or be part/full owner of the business.

There are several types of common business ownership agreements including:

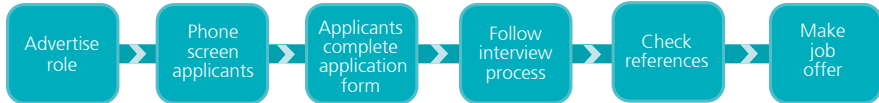
- contract milking
- variable order sharemilking and
- herd owning sharemilking.

New variations and business ownership models are continually being developed to suit the dynamic nature of the dairy industry.

All dairy farming business agreements allow farmers to grow their business knowledge beyond being an employee. It is also a successful pathway that allows people to build equity and achieve dairy farming business goals.

## Recruitment

A well thought out recruitment process will help you to attract and select the best person for your team.



## Application form

All applicants you choose to interview should complete an application form. This ensures you collect all relevant information from each candidate. It asks for information from a potential employee including contact details, ability to work in New Zealand, criminal convictions, relevant licenses, past employment and education, current health and reference names. To be considered true and correct it must be signed by the applicant.

## Interview process

1. Review the job description and person specification
2. Phone-screen applicants to identify who you will interview
3. Short list applicants
4. Plan for the interview - set aside appropriate time and place. Prepare questions
5. Interview the person – try and make them as comfortable as possible
6. Be prepared to answer questions about the farm, your management style and the package
7. Use the information/criteria you prepared and noted at the interview to go back over the person's suitability
8. Carry out reference checks
9. Make a decision
10. Call the successful candidate and offer them the job
11. Formally send a letter and employment agreement to the successful person

## Example questions

<b>Physical</b>	Do you have any previous injuries that may prevent you from doing all the duties required in this farm job?
<b>Experience</b>	Have you worked with an effluent system? What are the main things you have had to monitor when working with them?
<b>Attitude</b>	Can you think of an example of when you have had to use your initiative?
<b>Qualifications</b>	What training have you had both on and off farm with your previous employers?
<b>Fit with team</b>	What sorts of people do you like to work with?

## Reference checking

Past behaviours are usually the best indicator for future performance so it is important to ring an applicant's referees and find out more about the applicants skills, experience and attitude. Reference checking also allows you to confirm what the applicant has told you in the interview and to identify any potential hiring risks. It is best to make up a standard set of questions to ask each applicant's referees. Add any questions that are unique to an applicant, such as specific concerns, areas where you require more detail or points to clarify from the interview.

Always contact more than one referee to ensure a balanced view. Remember that legally you can only contact referees the applicant has nominated.

## Employment compliance checklist

### Before the first day of work:

- Signed employment agreement
  - Ensure the potential employee is given at least a week to seek legal advice before signing
  - Have the right employment agreement for the job:
    - Permanent full-time
    - Permanent part-time (where there is a consistent pattern of work e.g relief milker working every second weekend)
    - Fixed term (must be for a genuine reason eg calf rearer, summer student)
    - Casual (no expectation of ongoing work, works from time to time on a required basis)
- 90 day trial period:
  - Must be signed before any work starts and cannot be for more than 90 calendar days
  - Employee must not have worked for the employer before

- Description of the work, also known as a job description
- Tenancy agreement in writing
- Evidence that the person is allowed to work in New Zealand

### First seven days of employment

- Complete tax code declaration form IR 330
- Collect completed KiwiSaver forms
- Clarify details of citizenship, residence, or work visa

### Ongoing employment compliance (records kept for 7 years)

- Record of hours worked (timesheets)
- Record of wages and holidays (payslips)
- Evidence of providing correct leave and holiday entitlements
- Ensure all employees are paid at least the minimum wage for every hour worked. Averaging can only occur over the pay period and no greater than 14 days.

## Managing people tips

### Typically, people perform their best when they

- understand what you are trying to achieve
- understand what is expected of them
- have the opportunity to do a variety of tasks
- are involved in any decision making which affects them
- feel like a valued and respected part of the team.

To achieve these outcomes you need to communicate with your people. To really get the best from your people requires both good management and good leadership from you.

### Team meetings

The best team meetings are well organised – you know what you want to achieve and that you follow a regular agenda. Note down any actions that arise and document either on a white board in the dairy, or distribute copies to everyone by email or paper. These can then be checked back at the following meeting.

Consider including the following:

- health and safety
- current production rates for the season, compared with targets and compared with last year

- roster changes / leave
- key tasks that need to happen this week and why
- any changes to procedures on-farm
- trouble shooting any concerns on-farm.

### One-on-one reviews

One-on-one reviews are a more structured way of providing feedback to your employee. One-on-one reviews are about sitting down and discussing openly:

#### How things are going

- Is your employee enjoying their work?
- Do they think they are doing it well?
- Do you think they are doing it well?
- How can you support your employee better?

#### Discussing what is coming up on farm

- What will your employee’s key tasks be?
- Does your employee require any training to complete these tasks?
- Clarifying what you are expecting from them.

### Training plans

A training plan gives you and your employee something to work towards. For each employee it may be helpful to discuss the following headings:

Area for focus	Training required	By when	Training provider	Progress update

For comprehensive information on recruitment, selection and creating a high performing workplace including templates go to [www.dairynz.co.nz/people](http://www.dairynz.co.nz/people).