



STEPPING STONES

CAREER PATHWAYS FOR NEW AND CURRENT
EMPLOYEES IN THE TASMANIAN DAIRY INDUSTRY



Stepping Stones

Australia's dairy farmers are highly-skilled professionals who are proud and passionate about their industry. The Australian dairy industry offers a large variety of fulfilling careers and training opportunities that can progress throughout a dairy career.

Stepping Stones provides information on the different types of careers on a dairy farm and explores the different pathways available for people who are either looking to start a career on a dairy farm, or for experienced people who want to progress their dairy career further.

However the important thing about planning a career is that you need to choose the right pathway for you. Stepping Stones has dairy farmer case studies, advice on dairy careers and progression, and also has some great career tips from farmers.

It covers farm trainees, operators, managers and sharefarmers – whether you want work on a dairy farm or own your own property, Stepping Stones can help you find the pathway to achieve your career goal.

You can read about farmers such as Michael Hawker, a Farmhand completing a Diploma of Agriculture who appreciates the flexibility and range of opportunities in the dairy industry. Michael oversees the day to day running of the farm which milks 500 cows on 950 acres, and has started a small scale heifer replacement business to build his independent wealth.

Or you can learn about Clint Theodore, a dairy farmer who started his career via a school work experience placement. Clint completed an Apprenticeship, a Diploma in Agriculture and is currently transitioning from Farm Manager to Share Farmer. Life on the farm means much more than milking cows – the dairy industry creates careers for life.

Stepping Stones can be downloaded from: thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingstones

Why dairy?

Dairy is important

For almost 200 years, Australia's dairy farmers have been producing the dairy foods we enjoy every day. These high-quality products are consumed by millions of Australians and sold around the world. The Australian dairy industry is a major employer and contributes billions of dollars to the Australian economy. The industry is a vital contributor to regional Australian communities – it creates jobs, provides food and supports the local economy.

About 1,156 dairy farms in Western Victoria produce around 1.9 billion litres of milk a year, which equates to 22 per cent of Australia's milk production*

A career for life

The Australian dairy industry offers real opportunities for people who want to build a career rather than just have a job – dairy provides a career for life.

Australia's dairy farmers are skilled, innovative professionals who are passionate about their industry. They are committed to the health and wellbeing of their animals, land and communities, and are involved in all phases of the dairy industry whether it is on farm, or off.

The industry offers flexibility and work/life balance, and there is always something new to learn – building, computer operations, plumbing, nutrition, agronomy, machine operating, driving tractors, and looking after an animal's welfare – to just name a few!

New technology on dairy farms, such as automated (robotic) milking is providing the opportunity for a different way to manage dairy farms. Cows are milked automatically, and the farmer manages the process and the information generated through the system. Smaller scale dairy operations are an important focus for these automated operations.

Life on a dairy farm is much more than milking cows – it is a progressive and technologically advanced industry with world-leading practices.

You can get qualified

Dairy industry training is practical and courses relate to what you do on the farm. You can continue to build on your qualifications as you work and there are opportunities to learn about specialist areas.

Industry training is provided through a combination of formal (accredited) and informal programs offered through Dairy Australia, tertiary and vocational education, and regional programs like WestVic Dairy.

Qualifications provide a pathway to reach your career goals and the qualifications you gain will be nationally recognised, which means you can take them anywhere in Australia.



I would encourage farm owners, current farm employees and anyone looking for a great career in dairy farming to read Stepping Stones and explore the resources and tools available at dairyaustralia.com.au and thepeopleindairy.org.au



David Nation Managing Director, Dairy Australia

* Australian Dairy Industry In Focus 2020 (Source: Dairy Australia)

Planning your pathway

Career progression and pathway planning is the key to reaching your career goals. You may be starting in the dairy industry, wanting to progress further or wishing to progress to more senior farm positions.

The model below gives an example overview of what your pathway planning should look like.

And remember, sometimes planning your pathway may seem daunting, so break it into pieces and focus on each goal ahead, one step at a time!

Step one: Where are you now?

Don't just think about your current knowledge or job – consider the skills you have; your interests, the way you behave at work, your general attitude to your job, your workplace and the dairy industry in general.

- Do you like to work outdoors?
- Do you like working with people, animals and/or machinery?
- What are your non-work based skills, hobbies or interests?
- What is your education level?
- Do you have any specific work-based skills?
- Have you completed industry training or courses?
- What type of work do you do, you have any previous experience or training?
- What is your life like outside of work?

Step two: Where do you want to go?

Once you recognise your skills and interests, think about the career pathways that may suit you.

Remember, you might not want to move out of the job you already have, but you may want to learn how to do it better or plan for the future.

- Think about the type of work you really want to do, and why
- Consider the long term, not just your short term needs
- Consider fields of work that match who you are, your interests, and your current skill-set

- Are you looking for career advancement?
- Do you have, or need specialist skills or training to reach your goals?

Step three: Plan your journey

A career pathway is all about focusing on the journey, not just the destination.

You can continue to progress, gain experience and skills right throughout your career, and having a clear pathway helps to achieve your goals.

- Have you planned long term goals?
- Consider study options, training and specialist courses that will help you achieve your goals
- What industry programs can you get involved with?
- Set realistic goals!

Step four: Ask for advice

It's your career pathway – seek out information and speak to people who can offer tips and advice.

You can learn about the different jobs available on a dairy farm in this booklet – read the job profiles and the farmer case studies for some great progression tips.

- Talk to people in the industry for advice on how to reach your career goals*
- If you're at school, talk to career advisors and teachers
- Contact training organisations, read course guides and learn about industry programs
- Get involved in Dairy Australia and WestVic Dairy programs
- Learn about dairy industry scholarships

Contacts for further information

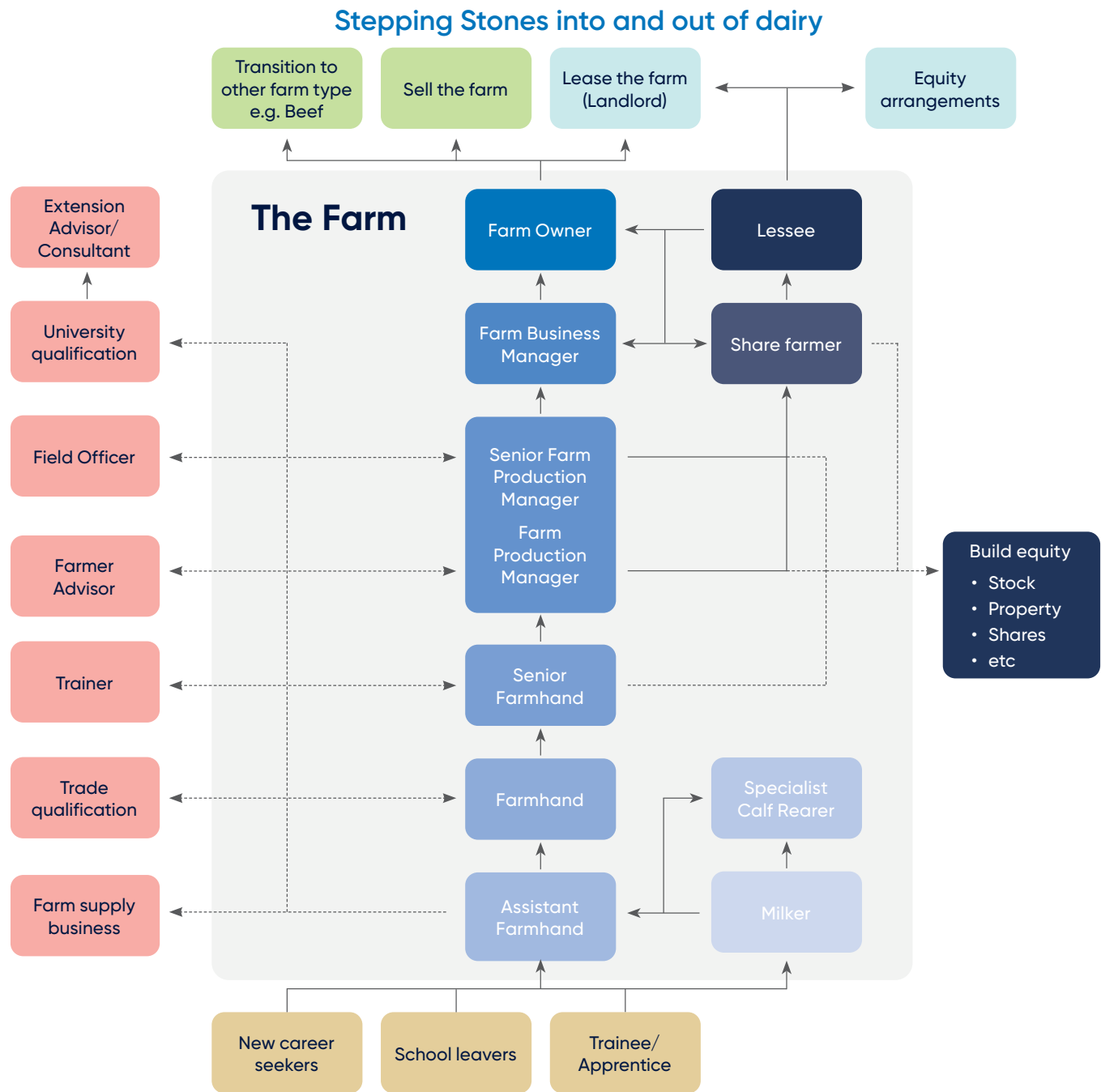
Dairy Australia
T 03 9694 3777
E dairyaustralia.com.au
thepeopleindairy.org.au

WestVic Dairy
T 5557 1000
E info@westvicdairy.com.au
westvicdairy.com.au

*WestVic Dairy has a network of mentors who may be able to help.

Dairy pathways

Stepping Stones is all about showing you the many pathways that are available in the Australian dairy industry. You may be thinking now about starting a career as a trainee on a dairy farm, however one day, you may have the potential to operate your own dairy farm. Or you could be currently working in the industry and are looking for opportunities to progress your position to a more senior role. The model shows a number of pathways on how to enter and progress your career in the Australian dairy industry, including qualifications at each stage.





Shara Leady Relief Milker

Shara jokes with her parents that they should feel bad for not bringing her up on a farm, as she has developed such a passion for dairy farming, dairy cows and the dairy industry. Shara has always had a compassion for animals. She moved around a lot as a youngster as her father was in the navy.

Whilst at Glenormiston College, Shara formed relationships with agriculture students that allowed her to secure a job as a jillaroo on a nearby beef property the following year. After this opportunity, Shara returned to study doing a Diploma of Agricultural Business Management. Whilst studying she worked at the local saleyards herding and drafting cattle. This experience enabled Shara to secure a farmhand role on a local dairy farm, specifically managing the 'heifer' shed which suited her attention to herd health.

With opportunities knocking as a result of her hard work ethic and determination, Shara transitioned to a job with Rural Finance while maintaining her interest in dairy farming through milking weekends. After several years, Shara decided to leave her office job to pursue Relief Milking on a full time basis. She is currently doing 14 milkings a week due to seasonal demand.

Shara has a full week with regular dairy farms, allowing her to develop relationships and follow systems efficiently. She enjoys the variety of working within a team and solo when required. With a high demand for reliable relief milkers, Shara is turning farmers down for work. She has a waiting list for when milkings become available and undertakes day work on farms – feeding calves, tractor work and general duties.

Shara sees the benefits of relief milking to include;

- Flexible with hours worked
- Dictate the week or month ahead
- Variety to keep job interesting
- Day is free between milking
- Remuneration is varied but high
- Can be paid wages; casual rates or salary if regular

The important points to being and developing as a relief milker are;

- Developing trusting relationships with farm owners
- Be reliable
- Be organised
- Have good communication skills
- Always ask questions
- Love/passion for animals and their well being
- Intuition
- Observant

Shara knows there are plenty of opportunities in the dairy industry for her. At this stage of her life, Shara appreciates the flexibility of a relief milker role which allows her to grow her real-estate profile and up skill at every opportunity. She is the current Chair of the Colac Young Dairy Network, an invaluable stepping stone to developing her goal of being more involved with the extension roles in her region. Shara has recently been appointed on the Young Agribusiness Professionals (YAP) committee.



Relief Milker or Milker							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<p>Typical day – rostered for early starts, time off during the day, then evening milking.</p> <p>Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – check, start and operate the dairy • Animal husbandry – identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses • Assist in the clean up of the milking shed • Assist with collecting cows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to start early and to finish in the evening • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This role can be a casual role or a part time contract • The minimum payrate is \$19.84 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2021 – as at time of printing, noting these rates are reviewed annually)* • Flexible hours which may suit your lifestyle 	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Relief Milker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Calf Rearer • Assistant Farmhand
							<p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role • Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020

Karli Pyke Calf Rearer

Karli has always had an interest in the dairy industry after enjoying time at her Grandparents' dairy farm in the South West of Victoria. As part of her secondary schooling, she completed a Certificate II in Agriculture. As part of her commitments to this subject, Karli travelled one day a week to her grandparent's dairy farm an hour away. Karli found this to be extremely rewarding and is very proud of this achievement.

She completed Year 12 and wanted to have a gap year to investigate various opportunities that lay before her. With an advertisement for a calf rearer advertised locally, Karli applied knowing the part time hours and flexibility would fit in with her lifestyle.

After undertaking an interview, Karli was successful and her new employer was flexible with the calf feeding regime to fit in with her travel commitments to and from the workplace. Karli received specialist on-farm training for her role and relished the opportunity to implement a slightly new regime for the young stock.

Karli's priority is the calves during each calving period; the farm has a split calving system. During each period, she is responsible for the colostrum intake, feeding of milk, grain, hay and ensure the housing is clean and appropriate. As a result of her specialist training, Karli can identify calves that are slightly poorly and start a treatment program for the calf if required, which can include electrolytes, tubing or antibiotic treatment.

Karli has completed her first season as a Specialist Calf Rearer and through her initiative and interest in the various aspects of the dairy farm, has been offered further casual work which includes tractor work and milking on afternoon shifts. She relishes these opportunities and identifies that a supportive work environment makes work more enjoyable. Karli is always learning on the job. She likes that other staff not only help her complete tasks she is having difficulty with, they also teach her how to do things she feels gives her more confidence for the future.

With the outstanding facilities and on farm training available, Karli is aiming to increase her knowledge and ability to extend her calf rearing expertise beyond the weaning phase by learning processes, procedures and responsibilities once the calves are in the paddock.

Karli believes the dairy industry has changed during her experiences and sees a lot of opportunity for herself within the industry. She relishes her role as Calf Rearer and gets a lot of satisfaction with the calves growth and health. Her job allows for flexibility to pursue other activities which are important to her such as sport, speedway and spending time with her family.

Karli has long term and short term goals and knows she is on the right path to stay a part of the dairy industry. Her growing confidence and ability to work both independently and in a team ensures Karli continues to build her skills and capabilities for whatever path she chooses to take.



Calf Rearer							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
Tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeding calves Wellbeing of calves – monitoring their health, vaccination, treating animals Assist in the clean up of the calf rearing shed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 6 months experience in rearing calves Like working with young animals 'Self starter' – able to work unsupervised Like working outdoors Capable of handling calves Happy to start early and to finish in the evening Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patience and care with animals Ability to take initiative and work independently High level of organising skills Taking pride in the work and the calf rearing facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This role can be a casual role or a part time contract The minimum payrate is \$19.84 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2021 noting these rates are reviewed annually)* 	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Calf Rearing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rearing Healthy Calves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers licence Transport 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist Farm Hand Farmhand When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 1 years experience for Farmhand role Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020

Pat Hickey Assistant Farmhand

Pat Hickey is aware of the demands and opportunities of a dairy farm as part of his childhood was spent on his parent's dairy farm. He grew up in a community where dairy farming is a popular vocation.

Whilst at school Pat, regularly helped out local dairy farmers for some financial support and because he loved the outside work. He also had access to a paddock so seized the opportunity to rear 6 – 8 calves at a time and grow them out to yearlings to sell. This showed his early initiative and commitment to caring for stock as he fed them before and after school until they were weaned. Pat recognises that this early venture taught him the responsibility of owning and how to maintain and manage the health of young stock.

Pat left school and originally completed an apprenticeship and Certificate III in Agriculture, all done while working full time on a dairy farm. While training, Pat also completed a chemicals users course, First Aid course and Artificial Insemination Certificate.

Pat currently works on a 700 acre dairy farm with 320 cows milked through a 20 aside herringbone dairy. Throughout his time at the farm, he has been encouraged to further his skills and knowledge base and appreciates that should he want to attend an event, his employer is very supportive of it.

He loves working with animals, being outdoors and the daily challenges on farm. While some tasks and routines are the same, there are different demands. Feeding patterns can change, cows health need to be monitored each milking and seasonally the work load is different – but these variations are what makes the job interesting and enjoyable.

Pat is responsible for completing and overseeing a range of tasks each day to ensure smooth running of the farm.

Pat's ultimate goal is to return to the family farm, which is presently leased, once he has all the skills and knowledge that he knows he needs to attain.

He acknowledges further training is essential and is striving to run his own dairy farm business.



Assistant Farmhand							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – collecting the cows from the paddock • Milk cows in the shed with a more experienced person • Animal husbandry – identify and treat common animal health problems, identify, record and care for newborn calves • Feed management and delivery – load and feed • Feed out hay or silage using machinery • Implement cleaning and maintenance under supervision • Implement milking quality assurance procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery, and can operate equipment (eg. tractor) under supervision • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace 	Around \$32,000 to \$45,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Assistant Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert II in Agriculture • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Calf Rearer • Senior Farmhand
							When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role • Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand • Completed Cert II in Agriculture

*Check the latest pay rates at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/pay-rates-2020

Michael Hawker Farmhand

Michael has grown up on the family farm where he is currently employed full time. He has known from a very young age this was the life and career he wanted to pursue. The day to day variation of tasks held his interest and the range of skills that he started to develop during his younger years, ignited his passion to be a part of the family business long term.

Michael ventured away from the industry to complete an apprenticeship for a light vehicle mechanic and for a brief period as part of a Blue Gum contracting service, before moving back to the dairy farm. He now is pursuing further qualifications within the dairy industry, completing a Diploma of Agriculture through the National Centre for Dairy Education (NCDEA). He has also attended a Cows and Fertility Session and In Charge Profitable Feeding Programme provided by West Vic Dairy RDP. Through this off-farm training, Michael is developing his knowledge, skills and confidence for furthering his career in the dairy industry.

Situated in the town of Milltown, just out of Heywood, Michael oversees the day to day running and completion of tasks for the dairy farm. With 500 cows milked on 950 acres, one of the challenges the business is tackling is to condense the calving pattern from its current drawn out seasonal calving pattern. This is an important focus as Michael knows it will impact the overall demands on the business by allowing everyone to have more of a break at different times of the year. The major goal of the business is a longer term sustainable path that will provide opportunities for all those involved in the family business. Michael sees opportunity for himself and other family members as they work for the long term benefits, and the fulfilment of a successful succession plan.

Through his rapid knowledge gain and skills attribution, Michael has used his initiative to run a small scale heifer replacement business by adjusting the neighbouring property to raise and grow out young stock. He identifies this as a major benefit of the dairy industry – the versatility of starting to build wealth creation independently.

Michael is involved with the Gleng Young Dairy Development Programme as a committee member which provides an opportunity to network with other young dairy farmers in the area. With successful events being run and plenty more in the pipeline, this is a rewarding off-farm venture.

Michael was also nominated and came runner up in the 2014 Great South West Dairy Awards for Young Dairy Leader of the Year. He is proud of this achievement and it is recognition for his contribution in the dairy industry.

Michael is enthusiastic and passionate about the dairy industry. He appreciates the flexibility of his career choice, acknowledging that regular time off is important and enables him to pursue his interests with the CFA.

Michael sees that his role as a Farmhand offers flexibility, long term goals, daily rewards and plenty of opportunities to learn and develop himself in dairy industry.'



Farmhand							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – check, start and operate the dairy unassisted. • Animal husbandry – identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses. Manage the program for cows due to calve, regularly observe and attend to animal health needs, assist in calving cows. • Carry out farm vaccination and drenching programs • Feed management and delivery – determine pasture availability and oversee its allocation • Operate and maintain feeding equipment • Implement farm pest and weed programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Able to take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace • Can work independently and follow farm procedures 	Around \$33,000 to \$50,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert III in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Keep saving • Look at the option of raising stock • thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/calfcosts.htm 	Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Farmhand
							When will I be ready?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand • Completed Cert III in Agriculture

Lachy Dullard Senior Farmhand

Lachy Dullard has taken his career into his own hands. He has turned some relief milking into a rewarding and enjoyable career in the dairy industry. His initial need for extra cash during university holidays provided him with an epiphany that working on a dairy farm was what he wanted to pursue.

Lachy grew up in the Colac district with his parents who are both teachers. Their family enjoyed a dry stock unit with Angus beef cows which gave him an opportunity to develop an understanding and compassion for animals. Lachy had planned his education path; after completing year 12 at Colac, he attended university to complete a Bachelor of Science majoring in Genetics and Chemistry as a pre requisite to becoming a veterinarian. During his university holidays, Lachy pursued casual employment with relief milking and this was where his 'love' for dairy was recognised.

During this period of relief milking, Lachy had a light bulb moment while bringing the cows in on a beautiful picturesque afternoon. Cows coming up the laneway, outside, he asked himself – why would I want to be doing anything else? The simple answer – he didn't.

Lachy then approached the farm owner for the possibility of permanent employment, with the opportunity to grow in his role and responsibilities. The farm owner saw the potential in Lachy and was impressed with his work ethic, so work was made available.

Lachy appreciates that he was fortunate to start his career with modern facilities including an 80 bale rotary with automatic cow identification. The total farming operation consists of multiple farms, so opportunity to increase responsibilities also keeps Lachy motivated. The business is in a state of expansion and development, providing an exciting space to be involved in.

Improving skills and knowledge is always a big component with any job, and Lachy recognises his employer's commitment to improving his knowledge and understanding constantly. After his first year of working on the farm, he was selected to go on a Dairy Study Tour of New Zealand with the UDV and has completed a 'Pastures for Profit' course which was extremely beneficial.

Work life balance is important, at any stage of a career in the dairy industry, and Lachy recognised he needed to communicate what he wanted and negotiate with the farm owner and managers for possibilities. After working hard to learn all the aspects of the dairy business, he has negotiated extra time to himself and now believes he has a very healthy balance. He finishes work at a time that allows him to pursue other interests and has a flexible arrangement which is one of the many benefits of the dairy industry.

Lachy has also used his knowledge to pursue personal asset growth by purchasing a block of land which he uses to adjust dairy cows for farmers in the district. He harvests hay from the land and has set himself up to run a successful small business. The farmers know their stock is in good hands as Lachy has an empathy and knowledge of feed requirements and condition that the cows should be striving for.

The key to developing and continuing to develop is communication. Lachy strongly acknowledges that support from his employers, and identifies there is accountability of success from both sides of the relationship. If he has ideas, or needs to discuss something, he always approaches the managers and owners and they work out a resolution.

He believes that through his hard work, attention to detail and passion for learning, he has gained respect in the workplace and therefore he's been promoted to assistant farm manager on another farm within the family business. And with minimal staff and excellent systems, Lachy is happy with the extra responsibilities.

Lachy is excited about his future in the industry. The decision to relief milk to fund his university days has led him to a rewarding, enjoyable, challenging and diverse career.



Senior Farmhand

The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – organise and oversee staff involved in the dairy operation, oversee the milk quality assurance program and OHandS program • Animal husbandry – administer drenches, vaccines, mineral supplements and other appropriate animal husbandry • Monitor the reproductive performance of the herd • Feed management and delivery – set up, operate and monitor concentrate feed equipment, determine the most appropriate time to graze fodder crops • Pasture production and cropping – determine paddock rotation for optimum pasture utilisation, follow weed management policy • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – oversee the maintenance program for farm vehicles, equipment and implements • Supervise the OH+S practices on farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like working with animals • Like working as part of a team • Like working outdoors • Like working with machinery • Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included • Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting • Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time • Be computer literate in regard to report writing and financial management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and care with the animals • Ability to take initiative and work independently • Being a team player • Taking pride in the work and workplace • Be able to supervise staff and staff training • Communication skills and the ability to resolve conflicts 	<p>Around \$40,000 to \$50,000</p>	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Senior Farmhand/ Farm Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cert IV in Agriculture • Cups on Cups Off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Keep building your dairy assets • Keep building stock • Think about farm equipment purchases 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Production Manager <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3-5 years experience for Farm Production Manager • Completed Cert IV in Agriculture

Clint Theodore Farm Manager – transitioning to Share Farmer

Clint is living the dream as far as he is concerned! His years of dedication and commitment to the dairy industry and a family farming operation has created opportunities for him, and he has truly risen to the challenge and is well on the way of establishing a flourishing and rewarding dairy career.

Clint did not grow up on a farm although had exposure to agriculture through extended family. The real desire to enter the dairy industry was sparked with a year 10 work experience stint. This led to Clint completing a school based apprenticeship while attending Colac College. The practical component of this was completed at the farm he is still currently working on. Clint continued his qualifications acquisition and has completed his Diploma of Agriculture and is looking to further develop his management and financial understandings.

From his apprenticeship he secured a permanent role at the same farm and continued a solid relationship with the farm owners. His excellent work ethic and initiative have been recognised and rewarded with opportunities to progress along his career path.

Currently Clint is a Farm Manager, working solo at a property that is part of a family business, milking 260 cows, but all responsibility is his own. The dairy and farm environment is set up to be a one farm operation and Clint relished the responsibility and challenges. Clint has embraced all responsibilities that have been given to him whilst working on the farm and has progressed through ranks of responsibility and he is on the path to transition from Farm Manager to Share Farmer on the present property.

Clint's most valuable piece of advice to those in the industry looking to progress, is 'don't rush the process.' He acknowledges the formal training qualifications he has reflects to those outside the dairy farm that he is competent and committed to the industry. He also believes that developing good and strong relationships with employers are crucial as this is where networking and opportunities lie.

One of the benefits Clint sees from his career is the freedom of organising the day to day work structure on the farm to enable a healthy work life balance. He also enjoys the opportunities arising from being an active member of Young Dairy Development Program (YDDP) and the Young Farmers Discussion group.

Clint has surrounded himself with knowledgeable, skilful and supportive people including agronomists, nutritionists and contractors, who help him to improve and progress in the dairy industry. He is proof that there is merit and reward in the career path and progression in the dairy industry, and while goal attainment may seem long term, it is definitely worth it.



Farm Production Manager							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Identify and correct problems in the machine function and operation • Animal husbandry – select cows for AI and assist with bull selection, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – set the rotation and oversee the delivery to all livestock, oversee the sourcing and reticulation of water to livestock to meet their requirements • Pasture production and cropping – determine the soil fertiliser program using soil fertility and production data, determine nitrogen applications based on seasonal conditions • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop paddock infrastructure including fencing, water troughs, laneways and drainage, implement the dairy maintenance schedule including the replacement of rubberware, machine testing and maintenance • Administration – ensure the farm is compliant with workplace legislation, organise rosters and allocate tasks • Staff management recruitment – recruitment, selection, induction, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Certificate IV in Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills and conflict management • Troubleshooting skills • Liaise and gather ideas outside the farm 	Around \$60,000 to \$75,000	Every dairy region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	For Farm Production Manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture • Cert IV in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence • Transport • Asset building to continue • Keep building stock and herd improvement 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Business Manager • Share Farmer • Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 years experience for Business Manager role • Resources and up to 5 years experience for share farmer or ownership role • Completed Diploma of Agriculture

Isaac Johnson Farm Business Manager

Isaac is employed as a Farm Business Manager for a New Zealand based investment company. The farm milks 1,050 cows with a workforce of 5 full time staff, one casual and Isaac and his wife, Michelle. Isaac and Michelle run the entire business in conjunction with a farm consultant that visits once a month to go over farming operations, seasonal decision making options and budgeting for the upcoming month and season. Budgets are then sent to be approved to the investors. Isaac feels that he is responsible for the whole farm business and takes pride in the work and decisions that he undertakes to ensure the farm is operating to its potential and within budget.

Isaac has always been dairy farming in some capacity. He has progressed from a farming apprenticeship to managing a 100 cow farm, a 750 cow farm and a 850 cow farm. He then moved to his current position where he has been for 8 years. While there was a large step early in his career, Isaac has remained within large herd operations.

The most important aspect of all of his career stepping stones are people. Isaac has always dealt with people in his various roles and believes that respect from all parties is paramount. He acknowledges that at times, it can be hard work on a dairy farm as everyone is battling environmental and business challenges, but it is his responsibility to ensure a culture of open communication and honesty is always fostered. He regularly holds staff meetings to discuss challenging times or upcoming events to ensure everyone is on the same page. His message is always; there are no bad questions! Staff feel comfortable to speak their mind and their views.

Isaac encourages staff to engage in off-farm training. Currently all staff are completing Certificates of Agriculture through the NCDEA. Isaac is comfortable that the skills learnt and confidence gained from this training benefits both the business and individual learning of systems implemented on farm such as weed management, and animal management through the seasons. It also creates stepping stones and opportunities for long term options for staff members.

Isaac loves the independent nature of being a Farm Business Manager and has a sense of ownership of the farm and performance. He is responsible for relationships of outside providers and long term planning of the farm – which he thoroughly enjoys. He is accountable for all aspects of the farm with the support of Michelle, across productivity, profitability, pasture and people. He has acquired an in depth understanding of the performance indicators and acknowledges the support of an excellent farm consultant.

The top three aspects that fuel Isaac's passion for dairy farming are:

- 1 The people
- 2 The animals
- 3 Opportunity to do something for themselves.

Isaac and Michelle have developed their career on their own merits and see this as one of the many benefits of a career in the dairy industry. There are flexible wealth creating opportunities that should be taken advantage of. Their family have enjoyed the long term nature of his career and growing up on the dairy farm has provided them with enjoyable recreational activities.

Isaac is thriving with his position and encourages all those within or interested in the dairy industry to up skill where possible, to ensure individuals get the most out of themselves and run businesses to full potential.



Farm Business Manager							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers Plant equipment and infrastructure Maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) High level people management skills High level Business Management skills Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business Staff management and leadership Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting High level of responsibility and decision making Negotiation skills and conflict management 	Around \$90,000 to \$120,000	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community Dairy Australia leadership programs Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Farm Production Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma of Agriculture Cert IV in Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers licence Transport Asset building and looking at other wealth creation opportunities (e.g. purchasing and leasing out a flat or house) 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Farmer Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and up to 5 years experience for share farmer or ownership role Completed Diploma of Agriculture

Leigh and Kellie Schuurings 50 per cent Share Farmers

Over ten years Leigh and Kellie Schuurings have built a substantial asset to own 1,000 cows and replacement stock.

From a young age, Leigh wanted to work in agriculture. His preference was to work on a beef enterprise but he was able to find a job on a dairy farm. Dairy wasn't unknown to Leigh, as he had occasionally helped out on his grandparent's dairy farm.

After school, Leigh started working as a Farmhand on different dairies until he progressed to a second in charge (2IC) role. When Kellie left school, she worked as a factory hand for six years.

Leigh worked 2IC for two years before taking on a 10 per cent share farming position, while Kellie started working on another dairy farm. He then moved to managing a small 280 cow dairy farm on wages, and progressed into a 33 per cent share farm position on the same dairy.

The Schuurings reared calves and purchased young stock. They purchased second hand equipment and Leigh moved to a 33 per cent share farm role on a larger 400 cow farm.

'I like how fast you can grow an asset, but you have to be on the same page as the farm owner,' Leigh said. 'If you're on the same page about how you want to run the business, then the business will go forward hugely.'

Leigh and Kellie aimed for a 50 per cent share farm position and took on debt to increase stock numbers. After four years, they moved to a 50 per cent share farm role on another farm, milking 400 cows before growing to 650 cows over four years.

The couple now own 1,000 cows and have been 50 per cent share farmers for seven years. Leigh and Kellie work alongside one casual, one part-time and two full time staff members.

'One staff member is doing a Certificate IV and our part timer is doing a school based Certificate II, so she's still at school but comes to the farm to work,' Leigh said.

Leigh and Kellie have three children and enjoy the lifestyle that dairy farming provides. Through programs like Cows Create Careers, they also promote the dairy industry as a rewarding career pathway to students in the region while continuing to plan for the future.

Three years ago, they further expanded their assets by purchasing land and they are now looking at possible farm ownership. 'We bought a run off block and we've been utilising it to the most of it's potential,' Leigh said.

We've also started to look at figures and the next steps to what else we can do with our money. We're thinking about buying our own dairy more seriously. We've looked at our current position and to the future - we can keep share farming, or we can do something for ourselves.'



Share Farmer or Lessee

The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques • Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations • Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas • Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • High level Business Management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills and conflict management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharefarmers are regarded as 'Independent contractors'. They share the farm income 	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Share Farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Farmer: • 33% Share – All mobile farm machinery • 50% Share – All mobile farm machinery and all stock • Lessee: • Lease property and own all mobile farm machinery and all stock 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessee • Farm Owner <p>When will I be ready?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the resources and equity you have built up

The Share Dairy Farming in Australia – Model Code of practice for share dairy farming with guidelines and tools for assessing share farming arrangements is available at thepeopleindairy.org.au/employment-rewards/share-dairy-farming

Information about leasing is available at thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future/leasing

Michael Palmer and Eliza Anderson Apprentice to Share Farmer to Owner

Michael completed a four year farming Apprenticeship, beginning at the age of 16, in 1996. When he finished the Apprenticeship he was employed for four years on wages on a farm at Sisters Creek. This farm was milking 135 cows in the first year and increased to 265 cows by year three on 107 hectares. At the end of each of these years Michael purchased 25 cows off the farm owner. Michael then had 100 cows which he owned at the end of his Apprenticeship. Michael had no debt on these cows, he owned them outright as he saved through each of these years to purchase the cows.

During this period Michael also bought some bricks and mortar, a house not far from the dairy farm increasing the value of his assets. Over time this house increased in value and he was able to use it as collateral with the bank for future purchases.

Michael worked his way up to 50 per cent share farming on this same farm and purchased 250 cows and the machinery from the farm owner. He used the bank to finance this new debt and had his parents and the farm owner as a guarantors for this loan.

The farm owner then leased the dairy farm next door and Michael leased their 150 cows and purchased another 50 cows.

The relationship to date was working well with the farm owner. There was constant discussion about the enterprise, how it was going and the future plan of the farm between all parties. After a two year period the farm owner then purchased this leased dairy farm.

Over the next ten years cow numbers increased to 600, a rotary dairy was built and the farm owner continued to purchase adjoining land. Michael purchased 30 per cent of a 36 hectares block in his name during this period. The plan for 2014/2015 is to milk a minimum of 800 cows on this Sisters Creek property.

Michael and Eliza continually reared the maximum number of heifer calves every year that they could, so they did not have to go out and buy cows. They have increased their equity by increasing stock numbers and had forced saving (with the rearing cost of the calf and heifer into the herd). The farm owner was continually spending on infrastructure (irrigation, laneways) to improve the productivity of the dairy farm for both themselves and the share farmer to constantly increase production profitably.



Then in 2005 Michael and Eliza purchased an ex. dairy farm at Rocky Cape with Michaels' parents as equity partners. The property was used to run all the replacement stock and potatoes were grown to assist with paying the interest bill to the bank. In 2012 Michael and Eliza made the decision to convert it back to a dairy farm including building a new 30 aside herringbone shed with cup removers.

Michael and Eliza decided to convert this property to dairying as they had surplus cows and wanted to dairy in their own right. They also had a very good capable employee that was keen to become a manager on the property. Another property at this time was leased, which is close to the home dairy farm, to run the young stock.

Over this 28 year period Michael and Eliza have had very good people working for them. Their longest serving employee has been with them for 17 years and four young men have done their farming apprenticeships under Michael. Michael and Eliza place emphasis on ensuring their people are happy and have a good work life balance.

In conclusion, Michael and Eliza emphasise that they would not have been able to take the different steps to get to where they are today without a supportive farm owner. They contribute part of their success to having farm owners that want the share farmer to succeed and 'being on the same page' as them.

Farm Owner							
The role	Prerequisites	Skills needed	Rewards	Regional support programs	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<p>Tasks will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk harvesting – Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques • Animal husbandry – organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff • Feed management and delivery – manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations • Pasture production and cropping – determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers • Plant equipment and infrastructure maintenance – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas • Administration – manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management • Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent) • High level people management skills • High level Business Management skills • Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements • Take responsibility for farm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business • Staff management and leadership • Communicate with farm workers and source goods and services external to the business • Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting • High level of responsibility and decision making • Negotiation skills and conflict management 	Depends on farm size and productivity	<p>Every dairy region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community • Dairy Australia leadership programs • Young Dairy Networks – which run events for your young staff • Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc. 	<p>For Farm Owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your farm • Milking Shed and all equipment needed to run the farm system • Livestock 	<p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase your involvement in Dairy Industry; e.g. RDP Board, Dairy Farmer organisation and other industry boards, Leadership programs.

Note: If you are farm owner looking at moving out of active dairy farming see thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future



Planning Your Dairy Career – Example

Career Vision: Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?

50% Share Farmer

How long will it take me to get there?

10 Years

Where Am I Now?

What is your current role?

Assistant Farmhand

How long have you been doing the role?

1 year

What level of training have you achieved to date?

Certificate II including 'Cups On Cups Off'

When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career?
(use the Stepping Stones tables as a guide)

I am ready to take the next step to the Farmhand level

Longer Term Planning – Resources and Money

If your plan includes Share Farming then you need to start building resources (e.g. equipment) and your bank balance.

Fill out the table to get an idea of the money involved in getting ready for share farming

The Stepping Stones program will provide a way to get financial and business management advice

Resource	Cost	When
<i>Quad Bike</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>Next year</i>
<i>Tractor</i>	<i>\$80,000</i>	<i>2 years</i>
<i>Other farm equipment</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>5 years</i>
<i>Cows eg 350 cows with young stock</i>	<i>\$450,000</i>	<i>10 years</i>

Short Term Planning

What is your next role?



What training and experience do you need?

I need to get to Cert III Ag

What level of finances and/or farm equipment do I need to acquire?

Aim to have \$2000 saved by the end of the year

Action	When
<i>Discuss my advancement with the farm owner</i>	<i>Next week</i>
<i>Enrol in Cert III Ag</i>	<i>2 weeks</i>
<i>Start saving</i>	<i>Now</i>

Longer Term Planning – Training and experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision



How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

6 years

What contacts do you need to make to allow you to work in the various farm roles along the way to your career vision?

Young Dairy Network regional events

Action	When
<i>Join the Young Dairy Network</i>	<i>3 weeks</i>
<i>Look up the RDP website to find upcoming events</i>	<i>1 week</i>
<i>Sit down with my current boss seek his/her advice on next steps</i>	<i>Next week</i>



Planning Your Dairy Career

Download this document at: thepeopleindairy.org.au/planning-for-the-future/stepping-stones

Career Vision:	Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?
	How long will it take me to get there?

Where Am I Now?

What is your current role?
How long have you been doing the role?
What level of training have you achieved to date?
When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career? (use the Stepping Stones tables as a guide)

Short Term Planning

What is your next role?



What training and experience do you need?

Longer Term Planning – Resources and Money

If your plan includes Share Farming then you need to start building resources (e.g. equipment) and your bank balance.

Fill out the table to get an idea of the money involved in getting ready for share farming

The Stepping Stones program will provide a way to get financial and business management advice

Longer Term Planning – Training and experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision



How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

[illegible]



Dairy Australia Limited ABN 60 105 227 987
Level 3, HWT Tower
40 City Road, Southbank Vic 3006 Australia
T +61 3 9694 3777 F +61 3 9694 3701
E enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au
dairyaustralia.com.au

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