Dairy Automation Engineer

Dairy engineering and maintenance

Job title	Dairy Automation Engineer
Department	Dairy engineering and maintenance
Reports to	Engineering Manager
Direct reports	None
Location	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*
Contract type	*[Permanent / fixed-term / other]*
Salary and benefits	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*

Job purpose

Supports, maintains and improves the control systems that run a dairy processing site, keeping plant available, safe and compliant. Delivers minor automation improvements, supports projects with control system content and builds the fault-finding skills of maintenance and operations staff.

Key responsibilities

Control system support

- Maintain PLC, HMI, SCADA and network hardware and software so the plant runs reliably
- Diagnose and fix control system faults with maintenance and operations teams
- Take part in the after-hours automation support rota
- Hold suitable spares so control systems can be restored quickly after a failure
- Plan control system maintenance in line with the site asset care strategy

Programming and improvement

- Configure and modify PLC, HMI and network device programs under change control
- Design and deliver minor plant improvements that raise efficiency, flexibility or reliability
- Write and update functional descriptions and as-built documentation
- Advise plant managers on control solutions to process and quality problems
- Recommend cost-effective technology upgrades and plan for obsolete equipment

Security, backups and records

- Apply the site cyber and physical security policies to all control systems
- Back up PLC code, HMI applications, recipes, set points and device configurations on a regular schedule
- Protect CCP compliance records and other control system data held for food safety
- Keep software versions and licences current, documented and recoverable
- Contribute to business continuity and risk plans for control systems

Projects

- Work with project teams on every project that includes control system scope

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- Define control requirements, architecture, costs and resources at the start of each project
- Test vendor software against the functional description before commissioning
- Support commissioning, handover and user training at project completion

Food safety and health and safety

- Follow the site food safety, quality and HACCP procedures in all control system work
- Validate and gain approval for any change affecting a CCP before it goes live
- Report hazards, incidents and food safety concerns promptly
- Take an active part in safety improvement activities and permit-to-work systems

Training and knowledge sharing

- Train maintenance and operations staff to use control system tools for fault-finding
- Coach technicians and apprentices in automation skills
- Keep up to date with control technology and developments in dairy processing
- Support autonomous maintenance and operational excellence programmes

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Degree, diploma or trade qualification in electrical, electronic, control or automation engineering
- At least five years' experience with automated control systems in a manufacturing plant
- Hands-on PLC and HMI programming, including working on code written by others
- Experience controlling liquid transfers, including pumps and temperature, flow and pressure loops
- Experience building and supporting Windows servers and workstations for control systems, including domains and user access

Desirable

- Experience in dairy, food or beverage processing
- Knowledge of SCADA, historian and batch control systems
- Understanding of industrial networks and operational technology cyber security
- Experience designing control software from functional descriptions

Skills and attributes

- Structured fault-finding and root cause analysis
- Disciplined documentation and change control
- Coaching and knowledge sharing
- Clear communication with technical and non-technical staff
- Risk awareness and safe working
- Prioritising competing requests

Measures of success

- Control system availability and downtime caused by automation faults
- Backups completed and tested on schedule
- Response and restoration times for control system breakdowns
- Automation improvements delivered against plan
- Compliance with change control and cyber security procedures

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Working conditions and safety

Site-based role in a food production environment with PPE and hygiene requirements. Includes an after-hours support rota and occasional work during shutdowns and commissioning.

- Follow health and safety rules and safe systems of work, and wear the correct PPE
- Follow food safety, hygiene, HACCP and quality procedures at all times
- Report hazards, accidents, near misses and concerns promptly

This job description outlines the main duties of the role. It is not a complete list, and the employer may update it as the business changes, in consultation with the jobholder.

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