Dairy Board Chair

Dairy leadership and board

Job title	Dairy Board Chair
Department	Dairy leadership and board
Reports to	Board, and accountable to shareholders or, in co-operatives, farmer members
Direct reports	None. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board, and the Chair leads that relationship
Location	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*
Contract type	*[Permanent / fixed-term / other]*
Salary and benefits	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*

Job purpose

Leads the Board of a dairy business and makes sure it works effectively in setting strategy, overseeing performance and holding management to account. Works closely with the Chief Executive, upholds high standards of governance and, in co-operatives, leads the Board's relationship with farmer members.

Key responsibilities

Board leadership

- Lead the Board and set agendas that focus on strategy, performance, risk and culture
- Run meetings that encourage open debate, constructive challenge and clear decisions
- Make sure directors receive accurate, timely and clear information
- Uphold directors' duties, including acting in the best interests of the company or co-operative
- Make sure conflicts of interest are declared and handled properly

Strategy and oversight

- Lead the Board in setting strategy, risk appetite and long-term goals for milk supply, markets and investment
- Make sure the Board oversees financial performance, capital allocation and major plant investments
- Keep the Board focused on key risks such as food safety, commodity volatility, climate and supply resilience
- Lead the Board's response to crises such as a major food safety incident or market shock

Working with the Chief Executive

- Build an open, trusting and challenging relationship with the Chief Executive
- Agree the Chief Executive's objectives with the Board and lead the annual performance review
- Act as a sounding board for the Chief Executive while respecting the line between Board and management
- Lead Chief Executive succession planning and appointment with the nomination committee

Board composition and effectiveness

- Lead the nomination committee in planning Board succession and the right mix of skills and independence
- Ensure new directors receive a thorough induction and all directors keep their skills up to date

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- Lead an annual Board evaluation and act on the findings
- Make sure the audit, remuneration, nomination and risk committees are well chaired, resourced and effective

Members, shareholders and stakeholders

- Lead the Board's relationship with shareholders or, in co-operatives, farmer members
- Chair general and member meetings and explain Board decisions clearly
- Make sure the Board understands farmer-member views on milk price, capital, supply terms and governance
- Weigh the interests of members, customers, employees, lenders and communities in Board decisions
- Represent the business with industry bodies, key customers, lenders and government where appropriate

Governance, ethics and culture

- Set the tone from the top on integrity, safety and ethical conduct
- Make sure governance arrangements meet company and co-operative law and the business's constitution
- Keep the Board's oversight role separate from day-to-day management

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Substantial board experience, including as a chair, senior director or committee chair
- Senior leadership experience in dairy, food, agriculture or another relevant sector
- Deep understanding of directors' duties, fiduciary responsibilities and corporate governance
- Proven ability to lead a board, build consensus and manage strong views
- Strong financial literacy and experience of overseeing major investment and funding decisions
- Ability to act independently and manage any personal interests, including as a farmer member where relevant

Desirable

- Experience of chairing a co-operative or farmer-owned business
- Experience of international markets, exports or commodity businesses
- Experience of leading a board through a merger, major investment or crisis
- Formal director or governance training

Skills and attributes

- Leadership and facilitation of debate
- Strategic thinking and sound judgement
- Relationship building and trust
- Diplomacy and conflict resolution
- Clear communication with members, shareholders and the public
- Integrity and independence of mind
- Coaching and mentoring of senior leaders

Measures of success

- Board evaluation results, including the effectiveness of the Chair
- Progress of the business against its agreed strategy
- Strength of Board and Chief Executive succession plans
- Quality of governance, including committee effectiveness and audit outcomes
- Shareholder or farmer-member confidence, shown through meetings, votes and feedback

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- Timely Board decisions on major investments and risks

Working conditions and safety

Part-time appointment with a greater time commitment than other directors, covering Board and committee meetings, regular contact with the Chief Executive, member meetings and stakeholder events. More time is needed during major decisions or crises.

- Lead by example on health, safety, food safety and animal welfare
- Uphold the code of conduct and all legal and compliance requirements
- Raise concerns and report incidents 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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