Dairy Evaporator Operator

Dairy processing (milk powder and concentrate)

Job title	Dairy Evaporator Operator
Department	Dairy processing (milk powder and concentrate)
Reports to	Milk Powder Shift Supervisor
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

Runs the falling-film evaporator that concentrates milk, skim milk or whey before it is spray dried or sent out as concentrate. Controls feed, heat treatment, vacuum, product temperatures and concentrate total solids, manages run length and cleaning, and keeps product safe and losses low.

Key responsibilities

Running the evaporator

- Start up, run and shut down the multi-effect falling-film evaporator and its thermal (TVR) or mechanical (MVR) vapour recompression system using written procedures (SOPs)
- Control feed flow, preheating and heat treatment so the product is pasteurised before it enters the first effect
- Hold the vacuum so the product boils at low temperatures, roughly 40 to 70 °C across the effects, and is not damaged by heat
- Adjust the plant to hold concentrate total solids at the target the dryer needs, usually around 45 to 55 per cent for milk powder
- Send concentrate to the balance or feed tank at a controlled temperature, and cool and crystallise whey concentrate before drying where required
- Watch the control screens and trends and act quickly on alarms for vacuum loss, level, temperature and total solids
- Plan run lengths and changeovers with the dryer operator and the supervisor so product keeps moving

Product quality and records

- Check concentrate total solids by refractometer or density meter at set intervals and correct any drift
- Keep to the set run lengths and intermediate rinses so fouling, heat-loving bacteria (thermophiles) and spores do not build up
- Monitor condensate (cow water) by conductivity or COD before it is reused
- Measure product losses to drain at start-up, changeover and CIP and work to bring them down
- Record feed rates, temperatures, vacuum, total solids and run times accurately and at the time
- Record batch and traceability details for every run

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- Hold any concentrate outside specification and tell the Milk Powder Shift Supervisor and quality straight away

Cleaning, hygiene and food safety

- Run cleaning in place (CIP) caustic and acid cycles and check that concentrations, temperatures and times meet the written programme
- Confirm the evaporator is clean and ready before each run
- Follow food safety rules on hand washing, clothing and hygiene zones
- Follow HACCP controls and report any failure at a critical control point
- Keep the evaporator floor and platforms clean, tidy and free of spills

Safety and teamwork

- Follow safe ways of working, lock-out rules and PPE rules at all times
- Follow the working at height rules on evaporator platforms
- Report accidents, near misses and unsafe conditions straight away
- Give and receive a clear handover at each shift change
- Report faults to maintenance and help with simple repairs where trained
- Suggest ideas to reduce losses, stoppages and unplanned cleaning

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Experience operating process plant in a dairy or food factory
- Ability to read control screens and trends and act on alarms
- Ability to follow written procedures exactly
- Basic understanding of total solids, temperature and flow
- Good number skills for total solids and yield calculations
- Willingness to work rotating shifts, including nights and weekends

Desirable

- Experience on evaporators, dryers or UHT plant
- Basic food hygiene certificate or similar
- Basic knowledge of HACCP (food safety controls)
- Understanding of how heat treatment and run length affect powder quality
- Experience of running CIP
- Forklift training as required where the job is based

Skills and attributes

- Attention to detail
- Staying calm under pressure
- Careful record keeping
- Clear communication at handover
- Practical problem solving

Measures of success

- Concentrate total solids within target
- Run lengths achieved without unplanned CIP
- Product losses within target
- Microbiological results within specification
- Complete and accurate records

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- No accidents or injuries

Working conditions and safety

Shift work on a milk powder site, including nights and weekends. The evaporator floor is hot, humid and noisy. The work involves steam, hot surfaces, CIP chemicals and working at height on evaporator platforms; PPE and training are provided.

- 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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