# Dairy Farm Forage and Crop Manager

## Dairy farming

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| **Job title** | Dairy Farm Forage and Crop Manager |
| **Department** | Dairy farming |
| **Reports to** | Farm Manager |
| **Direct reports** | Crop and machinery operators and seasonal staff |
| **Location** | *[To be confirmed by the employer]* |
| **Contract type** | *[Permanent / fixed-term / other]* |
| **Salary and benefits** | *[To be confirmed by the employer]* |

## Job purpose

Manages forage and crop production for a dairy farm so the herd has a reliable supply of high-quality, home-grown feed at the lowest practical cost. Plans cropping, soil fertility, crop protection, harvest and storage, and leads the crop and machinery team.

## Key responsibilities

### Cropping and feed planning

- Work with the herd manager and nutritionist to plan the farm's forage needs for the year
- Choose crops and varieties, such as maize, alfalfa, grass, cereals and sorghum, for the best feed value and yield
- Prepare the annual cropping plan field by field, including rotations
- Trial new varieties and growing techniques and assess the results

### Soil, water and fertility

- Sample and test soils regularly and plan fertiliser and manure applications
- Make best use of slurry and manure from the dairy as a nutrient source
- Plan and manage irrigation to conserve water and protect yields
- Use cultivation and rotation methods that protect soil structure and reduce erosion

### Crop protection

- Monitor crops for weeds, pests and diseases and plan integrated control
- Ensure pesticides are stored, applied and recorded safely and lawfully
- Handle and dispose of hazardous materials and empty containers correctly

### Harvest, storage and quality

- Time harvests to capture the best forage quality
- Oversee silage making, haymaking and grain storage to minimise losses
- Test stored forage and share results with the feeding team
- Check feed stocks against herd demand and plan for any shortfall

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### People, machinery and budget

- Plan, organise and supervise the daily work of crop and machinery staff
- Schedule servicing and repair of tractors, harvesters and other equipment
- Prepare and manage the crop budget and track cost per tonne of dry matter
- Keep computerised field records and produce regular reports for management
- Handle staffing issues, including performance and discipline, firmly and fairly

## Qualifications and experience

### Essential

- Degree or diploma in agriculture, agronomy or crop science
- Proven experience managing arable or forage crop production
- Sound understanding of soil fertility, soil testing and nutrient management
- Pesticide application certificate or equivalent training
- Experience supervising farm staff
- Experience managing a crop budget

### Desirable

- Experience growing forage for a dairy or livestock farm
- Knowledge of irrigation design and management
- Experience with precision farming technology
- An agronomy or advisory qualification

## Skills and attributes

- Planning and organisation
- Leadership and sound judgement on staffing
- Practical knowledge of farm machinery and maintenance
- Computer skills for records and reports
- Good working relationships with herd and feeding teams
- Clear written and spoken communication

## Measures of success

- Forage yield per hectare against target
- Forage dry matter, energy and protein on target
- Feed stocks cover herd needs all year
- Cost per tonne of dry matter within budget
- Harvest and storage losses minimised
- Full compliance with pesticide and environmental rules

## Working conditions and safety

Farm-based, with long hours and weekend work during sowing and harvest. Outdoor work in all weathers, with PPE for pesticide handling and machinery work.

- Follow health and safety rules and safe systems of work, and wear the correct PPE
- Follow animal welfare, biosecurity and medicine-use 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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