Dairy Farm Manager

Dairy farming

Job title	Dairy Farm Manager
Department	Dairy farming
Reports to	Farm owner or Managing Director
Direct reports	Herd, milking, youngstock and field staff, and any section supervisors
Location	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*
Contract type	*[Permanent / fixed-term / other]*
Salary and benefits	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*

Job purpose

The Dairy Farm Manager runs the dairy farm business, from the milking herd and youngstock to the land that grows forage. The role plans and leads production, manages staff and budgets, meets milk buyer and assurance standards, and drives improvements in milk yield, herd health and profitability.

Key responsibilities

Dairy and livestock

- Plan and oversee the milking herd, dry cows and youngstock
- Oversee milking routines, parlour hygiene and milk quality, including cell counts
- Set targets for milk yield, fertility, health and welfare and review them weekly
- Work with the vet and nutritionist on herd health and feeding plans
- Agree breeding, replacement and culling policy with the herd team
- Use milk recording and milk buyer results for fat, protein, cell count and bacteria to improve milk quality and value
- Make sure milk from treated and freshly calved cows is kept out of the bulk tank

Forage, crops and land

- Plan forage production and grazing to meet the herd's feed needs all year
- Manage silage making and conserved forage stocks
- Manage soil fertility, nutrient plans and rotations to improve yields
- Control weeds, pests and disease through integrated or organic methods

Standards and compliance

- Make sure the farm meets milk buyer, assurance and any organic certification standards
- Keep the farm compliant with health and safety, environmental and animal welfare law
- Maintain the records needed for audits, inspections and certification
- Keep medicine records and make sure withdrawal periods are followed, so no residues reach the milk

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Business and budget

- Prepare and manage annual budgets and control costs
- Monitor margins, milk price and input costs and report results to the owner
- Plan farm development projects and capital spending
- Use spreadsheets and farm software to track performance

People, machinery and improvement

- Recruit, train and lead farm staff and set clear duties and rotas
- Oversee safe use and maintenance of tractors and other farm machinery
- Trial and introduce new technology and research findings that add value

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Degree or diploma in agriculture, animal science or a related subject
- Good understanding of milk composition and quality, and how feeding, breeding and cow health affect fat, protein, cell count and bacteria
- Understanding of how milk is paid for by volume, composition and quality
- Several years' experience managing a commercial dairy farm or large dairy herd
- Sound knowledge of forage production, grazing and soil fertility
- Proven skill in budgeting and cost control
- Good working knowledge of farm machinery and its safe operation
- Good computer skills, including spreadsheets and herd management software

Desirable

- Experience of robotic or rotary milking systems
- Experience of organic dairy farming and certification
- Experience of farming in a hot, dry climate
- Experience of setting up or expanding a dairy unit

Skills and attributes

- Leadership and people management
- Commercial awareness and financial control
- Planning and organisation
- Practical problem solving and decision-making
- Clear written and verbal communication
- Knowledge of safety and environmental rules

Measures of success

- Milk yield, fat and protein, cell count and bacteria against target, and milk price achieved
- Forage quality and stocks against plan
- Costs within budget and target margin achieved
- Herd health, fertility and welfare indicators
- Assurance and audit results
- No serious safety or environmental incidents

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Working conditions and safety

A full-time, on-farm role that mixes office and field work, including early starts, weekend checks and on-call responsibility for emergencies. Work is outdoors in all weathers, sometimes in hot conditions, and PPE is worn where needed.

- 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.

Recruiting for this role? Advertise it on Dairy Jobs and reach a combined network of over 250,000 dairy professionals worldwide: dairyjobsearch.com/advertise-dairy-jobs

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