Dairy Non-Executive Director

Dairy leadership and board

Job title	Dairy Non-Executive Director
Department	Dairy leadership and board
Reports to	Chair and the Board
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

Serves as an independent member of the Board of a dairy business, bringing objective challenge, wider experience and sound judgement. Helps set strategy, oversees management performance, risk and controls, and contributes to Board committees, without taking part in day-to-day management.

Key responsibilities

Board duties and strategy

- Act in the best interests of the company or co-operative and its members as a whole
- Exercise independent judgement, reasonable care, skill and diligence in all Board decisions
- Help shape strategy on milk supply, markets, product mix, plant investment and sustainability
- Challenge proposals constructively and test assumptions on commodity markets, costs and returns
- Declare any conflicts of interest and stay independent of management and of any major interest group

Oversight of performance

- Monitor management's performance against the agreed strategy, budgets and objectives
- Scrutinise financial results, cash flow, funding and the integrity of financial reporting
- Review major capital projects, acquisitions and disposals before approval and after completion
- Hold the Chief Executive and executive team to account without managing the business day to day

Risk, control and compliance

- Test that risk management and internal controls are robust and working in practice
- Oversee key risks such as food safety, milk supply, commodity price volatility, cyber security and climate
- Review compliance with the law, the code of conduct and the business's ethical standards
- Check that serious whistleblowing concerns reach the Board and are acted on

Board committees

- Serve on one or more Board committees, such as audit, remuneration, nomination or risk
- Review financial reporting, audit findings and auditor effectiveness when serving on the audit committee

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- Help set executive pay that rewards long-term, sustainable performance when serving on the remuneration committee
- Support Board succession and a broad mix of skills and experience when serving on the nomination committee
- Chair a committee when asked, drawing on relevant expertise

Stakeholders and Board effectiveness

- Understand the views of shareholders, farmer members, customers, employees and lenders
- Visit farms, plants and markets to understand the business at first hand
- Take part in induction, ongoing development and the annual Board evaluation
- Act as a sounding board for the Chair and executives while keeping independence

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Substantial senior leadership experience in dairy, food, agriculture, finance or another relevant sector
- Independence from management and from any interest that could affect objective judgement
- Sound understanding of directors' duties, fiduciary responsibilities and corporate governance
- Strong financial literacy and the ability to scrutinise financial statements and investment cases
- Ability to challenge constructively while supporting collective Board decisions
- Capacity to commit the time needed for Board meetings, committee work and preparation

Desirable

- Previous board or committee experience, ideally as a non-executive director
- Recent and relevant financial experience suitable for the audit committee
- Experience of co-operative governance or farmer-owned businesses
- Expertise in an area such as international trade, food safety, sustainability, technology or people

Skills and attributes

- Independent and objective judgement
- Constructive challenge and influencing
- Financial and commercial acumen
- Strategic thinking
- Risk awareness
- Integrity and discretion
- Active listening and collaboration

Measures of success

- Attendance at, and preparation for, Board and committee meetings
- Quality of challenge and contribution, as assessed in the Board evaluation
- Effectiveness of the committees served on, including completion of their annual work plans
- Board oversight of key risks, controls and progress against strategy
- Completion of induction and ongoing director development

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Working conditions and safety

Part-time appointment involving regular Board meetings, committee work, preparation, an annual strategy session and some site visits. More time may be needed during major transactions or difficult periods.

- 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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