Dairy Operations Director

Dairy processing

Job title	Dairy Operations Director
Department	Dairy processing
Reports to	Managing Director
Direct reports	Senior Production Manager, Engineering Manager, Quality Manager and other department heads
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 all manufacturing operations at a dairy processing site, so that products are made and dispatched safely, to specification, on time and within budget. Manages the heads of production, engineering, quality and supporting departments, and drives continuous improvement, cost control and the longer-term development of the site.

Key responsibilities

Site leadership and people

- Lead, coach and hold department heads to account for safety, output, quality and cost
- Set up a structured six-monthly appraisal process for managers and supervisors and review the results
- Decide staffing levels, recruit senior staff and recommend their pay to the Managing Director
- Make sure every new starter completes induction and basic food hygiene training before working in production areas
- Run a timetabled cycle of team briefings so information reaches every level of the site
- Act as first point of contact for employee relations issues and handle discipline in line with company policy

Production and planning

- Turn sales forecasts and the availability of milk, whey and ingredients into realistic production and packing plans
- Plan ahead for seasonal changes in milk volume, composition and product demand
- Check that plant, people and materials are ready for each production run
- Agree contingency plans with managers to keep output moving during breakdowns
- Work with planning, sales, logistics and milk procurement to meet customer orders and keep stock rotating

Engineering and assets

- Keep plant and equipment maintained, calibrated and available for production
- Ensure statutory inspections of pressure vessels, lifting equipment and similar plant are done on time
- Identify future investment needs and make the case for capital spending to the board

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- Specify new equipment and obtain quotations with the purchasing team

Food safety, quality and compliance

- Oversee the quality and food safety management systems, including ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 where held
- Make sure HACCP critical control points are monitored, recorded and acted on
- Check that ingredients and packaging come only from approved suppliers against agreed specifications
- Enforce cleaning, hygiene and contamination controls across all production and storage areas
- Lead the site through regulatory inspections, customer audits and certification visits
- Keep operations in line with current health and safety, food safety and environmental law

Budgets, performance and reporting

- Agree departmental budgets and control spending on labour, utilities, packaging and maintenance
- Track yields, process losses, waste, energy use and absence, and act on adverse trends
- Find savings through better yields, process changes, competitive sourcing and labour efficiency
- Produce a weekly report for the Managing Director on yields, efficiency, waste and non-conformances
- Present a monthly review of site performance and budget variances to the board

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Degree or equivalent qualification in dairy technology, food science or engineering
- Extensive senior management experience in food or dairy manufacturing, typically 10 years or more
- Track record of leading managers across production, engineering and quality functions
- Sound knowledge of HACCP, ISO 9001, ISO 22000 and food safety regulation
- Experience of setting and managing manufacturing budgets
- Experience of preparing and presenting capital expenditure cases

Desirable

- Formal management qualification such as an MBA or diploma in management
- Experience in milk powder, whey or infant formula production
- Lean manufacturing or Six Sigma training
- Recognised health and safety qualification
- Experience of product development

Skills and attributes

- Leadership and people development
- Production planning and scheduling
- Financial and commercial awareness
- Data analysis and performance reporting
- Problem solving under pressure
- Clear communication at all levels, including with regulators and customers
- Handling conflict calmly and fairly

Measures of success

- Lost-time accidents and reportable incidents
- Product yield and process losses against budget
- Operating costs against budget
- Customer complaints, and non-conformances closed on time

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- On-time, in-full delivery of customer orders
- Audit and inspection outcomes

Working conditions and safety

Site-based role in a food production environment, with PPE and hygiene rules in production areas. Hours follow the needs of the business, including some out-of-hours and on-call cover.

- 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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