Dairy Production Planner

Supply chain and planning

Job title	Dairy Production Planner
Department	Supply chain and planning
Reports to	Supply Chain Manager (or Operations Manager)
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

Turns the sales forecast and the milk intake forecast into a production plan the factory can run: which products, on which lines, in which order and when. Keeps milk, people, packaging and plant capacity in balance, so customers get what they ordered, milk is not wasted and changeovers and stock stay low.

Key responsibilities

Building the plan

- Start from the milk balance: litres arriving each day, the fat and protein available, and what each product takes out
- Match the milk balance to the sales forecast and customer orders to decide what is made, on which lines, in which order and when
- Plan short-shelf-life products such as fresh milk, cream and yoghurt daily against orders
- Plan long-life products such as UHT, powders, cheese and butter in longer campaigns
- Place surplus milk into long-life products, or arrange its sale as raw milk, concentrate or cream
- Sequence products to meet allergen and product rules, for example plain before flavoured and lower fat before higher fat where the site works that way
- Agree the weekly plan with production, sales and milk supply, and issue it on time

Milk, materials and capacity

- Check that every day of milk can be processed within its holding time
- Work within line capacities, run lengths, CIP and changeover times
- Confirm packaging and ingredient availability with procurement and the warehouse before the plan is issued
- Keep stock cover within target for each product, allowing for shelf life and customer order lead times
- Flag capacity shortfalls, surplus milk or material gaps early, with options to fix them
- Build planned maintenance, cleaning windows and holidays into the plan

Running the plan day to day

- Release works orders in the ERP or MRP system and keep them accurate
- Track completion against plan through the day and across shifts

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- Re-plan quickly when milk volumes, breakdowns or orders change, and tell everyone affected
- Take part in the daily production meeting and answer queries from the factory floor
- Work closely with milk supply, sales, production, warehouse and procurement to keep the plan achievable
- Agree with sales what can and cannot be made when demand is higher than capacity

Reporting, systems and improvement

- Report plan adherence, stock cover, waste and service level each week
- Keep planning data in the ERP or MRP system up to date, including run rates, changeover times, bills of materials and shelf lives
- Review forecast accuracy with sales and feed back where the forecast was wrong
- Look for ways to cut changeovers, overtime and waste through better sequencing
- Keep planning procedures written down so that others can cover the role
- Build new product launches and product deletions into the plan

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Experience in production planning or scheduling in a food, dairy or process manufacturing business
- Strong spreadsheet skills and experience of an ERP or MRP system
- Good numeracy and attention to detail
- Understands capacity, changeovers and shelf life
- Clear communication under pressure
- Able to work early starts or weekend cover when the plan needs it

Desirable

- Degree or diploma in supply chain, business, food or dairy technology
- APICS, CIPS or similar supply chain qualification
- Experience with milk balance planning or fat and protein accounting
- Experience with advanced planning or scheduling software
- Lean or continuous improvement training
- Knowledge of allergen and product sequencing rules

Skills and attributes

- Organisation
- Numeracy
- Calm problem solving when the plan breaks
- Negotiation between sales and production
- Clear communication
- Attention to detail

Measures of success

- Plan adherence
- Customer service level: orders delivered in full and on time
- Milk processed within holding time, with no milk lost
- Stock cover and waste within target
- Changeovers and overtime within plan
- Forecast accuracy improving with sales

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Working conditions and safety

Office based on a production site, with daily contact with the factory floor and warehouse. Early starts or weekend cover are needed on some sites, and there may be occasional travel to other sites or customers.

- 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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