Dairy Reliability Engineer

Dairy engineering and maintenance

Job title	Dairy Reliability Engineer
Department	Dairy engineering and maintenance
Reports to	Engineering 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

Sets the maintenance strategy for plant assets at a dairy processing site so that equipment runs reliably at the lowest total cost. Uses failure data, root cause analysis and condition monitoring to prevent breakdowns, reduce losses and improve plant performance.

Key responsibilities

Maintenance strategy

- Build and update the critical asset register and criticality rankings
- Define a maintenance strategy for every critical asset, choosing between preventive, predictive and run-to-failure approaches
- Develop and refine the asset maintenance plan, removing tasks that add no value
- Write preventive maintenance policies, procedures and task instructions
- Set minimum stock levels for critical spares and report on spares holdings

Failure analysis and improvement

- Track production losses, downtime and high-cost assets to set improvement priorities
- Lead root cause analysis on repeat failures and put engineering fixes in place
- Analyse asset condition, utilisation, OEE and remaining useful life with production
- Introduce condition monitoring such as vibration analysis, thermography and oil analysis
- Support continuous improvement work so reliability gains last

Performance reporting

- Measure and report reliability KPIs such as MTBF, MTTR and planned maintenance compliance
- Monitor completion of preventive maintenance against schedule and budget
- Present findings and recommendations to maintenance and production managers
- Help the maintenance team meet its service, cost and efficiency targets

Projects and new equipment

- Give reliability and maintainability input at the design stage of projects

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- Prepare commissioning and maintenance plans for new or modified assets
- Make sure new equipment is set up in the CMMS with spares lists and maintenance tasks

Compliance, safety and food safety

- Make sure maintenance practices meet HACCP, good manufacturing practice and hygiene standards
- Support the calibration programme for quality-critical instruments
- Help induct new starters and contractors and issue permits to work
- Report risks to safety, food safety or environmental compliance and support corrective action
- Support effluent and emissions reduction plans where plant changes are needed

Technical support

- Give technical advice to production, maintenance and engineering staff
- Coach technicians and apprentices in reliability methods
- Work with suppliers and specialists on technical problems

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Trade or degree-level qualification in an engineering discipline, ideally mechanical or electrical
- At least five years' maintenance experience in a manufacturing or process plant
- Good knowledge of CMMS and planned maintenance systems
- Experience of root cause analysis and structured problem solving
- Understanding of food manufacturing regulations and hygiene standards
- Strong computer and data analysis skills

Desirable

- Experience in dairy or food processing
- Certification in reliability engineering or condition monitoring
- Knowledge of RCM, FMEA and Weibull analysis
- Experience of Lean, TPM or Six Sigma

Skills and attributes

- Analytical thinking and data interpretation
- Systematic problem solving
- Planning and organising several tasks at once
- Clear communication and report writing
- Influencing without direct authority
- Building strong working relationships

Measures of success

- Mean time between failures (MTBF) for critical assets
- Mean time to repair (MTTR)
- Unplanned downtime and production losses from equipment failure
- Planned maintenance completed on time
- Maintenance cost per unit of output

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Working conditions and safety

Site-based role in a food production environment, combining office work with time on the plant floor in PPE. Safety-sensitive role that needs some flexibility to support breakdowns and shutdowns.

- 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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