Dairy Relief Milker

Dairy farming

Job title	Dairy Relief Milker
Department	Dairy farming
Reports to	Herd Manager or Farm Manager (the farmer on a family farm)
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

Covers milkings on one or several dairy farms when the regular staff are off, often at short notice. Learns the routine and parlour settings of each farm, milks the cows calmly and cleanly, keeps milk from treated cows out of the bulk tank, runs the plant wash after every milking and leaves clear notes for the farm team.

Key responsibilities

Milking

- Arrive in good time, set up the parlour and check the plant, vacuum and pulsation are running as they should
- Bring the cows in and put them through the parlour calmly, in the order the farm uses
- Prepare teats, attach and remove clusters and apply post-milking teat disinfectant the way the farm does it
- Milk cows under treatment or within a withdrawal period separately and keep their milk out of the bulk tank
- Milk high cell-count cows last, as marked or listed by the farm
- Check milk is going to the bulk tank and the tank is cooling
- Keep to the parlour settings and feeding set by the farm and do not change them without asking

Learning each farm

- Take a proper handover before the first milking: cow numbers, treated cows, fresh calvers, feeding and anything unusual
- Learn where the parlour controls, wash programme, chemicals and treatment records are kept
- Follow the farm routine and written notes rather than your own habits
- Ask the farmer or Herd Manager when unsure rather than guessing
- Know who to ring if the plant fails, a cow is sick or there is a problem with the milk collection
- Keep what you see and hear on each farm private

Cow health and welfare

- Look for signs of mastitis, lameness, injury and sick cows at every milking
- Fore-milk or strip where that is the farm routine and check for clots or changes in the milk
- Mark, record and report any cow you are worried about so the farm team can deal with her

© 2026 Dairy Jobs (Specialist Recruiters Ltd). Free to adapt for your own vacancies. Not for resale.

- Check the treatment board or records so treated cows and withdrawal periods are handled correctly
- Move cows calmly along tracks and through gates at their own pace, and shut gates behind you
- Only treat a cow if the farm has asked you to and shown you how, and record every treatment

Hygiene, other jobs and notes

- Run the plant wash after every milking and check it has run through properly
- Wash the bulk tank after the milk collection and set it ready to cool the next milking
- Hose down the parlour, pit and collecting yard and leave them clean
- Scrape yards, feed calves or do other jobs when asked
- Leave clear written notes after each visit: cows flagged or treated, anything broken and supplies running low
- Report faults with the plant, cooling, water or power straight away
- Look after the farm equipment and tell the team about anything damaged or lost

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Experience milking cows in a herringbone, rotary or similar parlour
- Able to work alone and follow a routine you have been shown
- Own transport and a willingness to travel between farms
- Available for early starts, late finishes, weekends and public holidays, sometimes at short notice
- Good basic reading, writing and number skills to follow notes and keep records

Desirable

- Experience on more than one farm or with different parlour types, including robotic systems
- Experience using a California Mastitis Test (CMT) paddle to check suspect quarters
- Experience feeding calves and handling youngstock
- Able to drive a tractor, telehandler or quad bike safely for scraping and feeding, with any licence or certificate as required where the job is based
- Basic understanding of milk hygiene, bacterial counts (Bactoscan or TBC) and somatic cell counts, and how milking affects them
- Able to help at a calving
- Training in the safe use of parlour chemicals or animal medicines, with a certificate as required where the job is based

Skills and attributes

- Reliable and on time, every time
- Calm and patient with cows
- Quick to pick up a new routine
- Honest about what you have seen and done
- Clear written and spoken communication
- Hard working and happy to get stuck in
- Flexible about hours and short-notice calls

Measures of success

- Every booked milking covered and started on time
- No milk from treated cows reaching the bulk tank
- Cows milked calmly with no injuries to cows or people
- Plant washed after every milking and bulk tank washed after every collection

© 2026 Dairy Jobs (Specialist Recruiters Ltd). Free to adapt for your own vacancies. Not for resale.

- Sick, lame or mastitis cows spotted and reported early
- Clear notes left after every visit
- Farms ask for you again

Working conditions and safety

Early starts and late finishes, including weekends and public holidays, often at short notice and on more than one farm. The work is physical, in a wet, noisy parlour around large animals and in all weathers, and you will often work alone; own transport is needed. Employment or self-employed arrangements vary and should be stated in the advert as required where the job is based.

- 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

© 2026 Dairy Jobs (Specialist Recruiters Ltd). Free to adapt for your own vacancies. Not for resale.