Dairy Technical Director

Dairy leadership and board

Job title	Dairy Technical Director
Department	Dairy leadership and board
Reports to	Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports	Heads of quality assurance, regulatory affairs, product development and laboratories, and site technical managers
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 food safety, quality, regulatory affairs and technical development across a dairy business, so that every product is safe, legal and consistent. Protects the business's licence to trade with regulators, customers and certification bodies, and turns technical expertise into new products and better performance.

Key responsibilities

Technical strategy and leadership

- Set the technical strategy and standards for food safety, quality and product integrity across all sites
- Lead and develop the quality, regulatory, laboratory and product development teams
- Advise the Chief Executive and the Board on technical risks, incidents and emerging regulation
- Build a strong food safety culture from the shop floor to the executive team

Food safety and quality systems

- Own the group food safety and quality management system and make sure every site applies it consistently
- Set HACCP, allergen, environmental monitoring and pathogen control standards for each product category
- Agree raw milk quality, antibiotic residue and contaminant testing standards with the milk supply team
- Oversee laboratory testing, positive release and the accreditation of laboratories
- Lead investigations into serious non-conformances and drive root-cause corrective action

Regulatory compliance and incident management

- Keep the business compliant with food safety, labelling, export and veterinary certification requirements in every market served
- Monitor changes in food law and standards and prepare the business to meet them
- Lead incident management, product withdrawals and recalls, including communication with regulators and customers
- Maintain relationships with food safety regulators, export authorities and industry bodies

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Audits, customers and certification

- Prepare sites for customer, certification and regulatory audits and track corrective actions to closure
- Maintain certification to recognised food safety schemes at every site
- Act as senior technical contact for key retail, food-service and ingredients customers
- Oversee customer complaint handling and lead technical reviews with major accounts

Product development and technical support

- Lead new product development from concept through factory trials to launch
- Approve product specifications, shelf-life studies, labels and nutrition claims
- Provide technical support to operations on yield, process capability and product defects
- Work with marketing and sales on product renovation, cost reduction and customer-specific products
- Assess new ingredients, packaging and suppliers for food safety and quality risk with procurement

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Degree in food science, dairy technology, microbiology, chemistry or a related discipline
- Extensive senior technical leadership experience in dairy or food manufacturing
- Expert knowledge of HACCP, food safety management systems and recognised certification schemes
- Proven experience of leading regulatory inspections, customer audits and product recalls
- Track record of leading multi-disciplinary technical teams across more than one site
- Experience of taking new products from development to launch

Desirable

- Postgraduate qualification in food science, dairy science or quality management
- Experience of infant nutrition, medical nutrition or other high-care dairy products
- Experience of export certification and the requirements of several international markets
- Lead auditor qualification for food safety management systems

Skills and attributes

- Sound technical judgement and risk-based decision making
- Leadership and team development
- Crisis and incident management
- Clear communication with regulators, customers and the Board
- Influencing without direct authority
- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Commercial awareness

Measures of success

- Product recalls, withdrawals and serious food safety incidents
- Customer complaints per million units sold
- Audit and certification outcomes, and corrective actions closed on time
- Right-first-time quality and product release performance
- New products launched on time and to specification
- Regulatory compliance, with no enforcement actions

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Working conditions and safety

Based at a head office or main site, with regular travel to plants, customers and suppliers, including some international travel. Must be available out of hours to lead the response to food safety incidents.

- 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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