

We as the new generation of farm employees value the importance of achieving a balance of social, environmental and financial success. After speaking to some of my peers, it was clear that we also value an employer who values us. This is through a good team culture, continuous learning and personal or career development opportunities. We like to work for businesses which look after their people and allow us the ability to live a healthy balanced lifestyle. I recognise that this is nothing new and that most of you are already achieving these things within your farm team, well done.

It is not all about perks and money. It is about your brand and reputation as a good employer. Lots of young people go to Lincoln thinking they want to be a rural professional, not a dairy farmer. This is because the banks have a great reputation for employing and developing good keen young people, particularly through their graduate programmes. A graduate coming out of university looks at a banking job and thinks 40hrs of work per week and weekends off, which allows for a great work/life balance, a good salary, potentially a work vehicle and a business that will invest in me. Unfortunately, some young people do not see the same things when thinking about the dairy industry. The dairy industry needs to promote its brand and reputation as a good employer with opportunities for career progression. I commend all the people who are currently working hard at this.

Whilst things such as high salaries, flash new houses or meat and fire wood are seen as attractive, they will not necessarily keep people at a farm. The bottom line is that you have to have a good strong team culture that shows through in the workplace. Steve Jobs once said *"Great things in business are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people."* A good positive work environment will make it easier to get out of bed on those early mornings.

Things people value in a good employer or manager are:

- Treating people with respect
- Managers who take time to listen
- Managers who lead by example and have equal time of day for all team members
- People value a leader who is going to step in and get his or her hands dirty, not just sit back and give orders
- People enjoy receiving recognition for a job well done along with positive or negative feedback
- Employees value people who are willing to help them progress and reach their goals. Whether that be to become a farm owner, sharemilker, manager or excellent milk harvester
- Employees value farmers who are open to new ideas and the use of technology. We are the first generation to grow up with the internet as an everyday part of our lives and as a result like data. We want to farm smarter. We see using technology to aid decision making as an important part of this. The ability to use tools such as protrac and minda for cow management, aquaflex for irrigation management and pasture coach or minda land and feed for pasture management are appealing to any young employees
- Finally, a good employer is aware of industry issues such as nitrate leaching and are up to date with their health and safety plan

The next generation of farm employees want to work for good employers who are willing and able to help us learn and grow. Training can be offered in many ways such as:

- Peer to peer learning from within the farm team
- Primary ITO courses such as milk quality and effluent management
- Along with attending DairyNZ events and field days

The best of us want to grow and develop as human beings. Ambitious and motivated people value the opportunity to influence the farm which they work on. Progressive employees like the opportunity to access key figures and information such as production targets, feed budgets and even profitability information. From this they can see and understand how the decisions they make on a daily basis impact the farm business.

My last and most important point is that all farm staff desire the ability to have a healthy work life balance along with fair pay in comparison to other career options. To achieve this the workplace must be flexible and sociable. This requires a flexible roster where all team members are happy. Ideally, this roster will have regular time off and most likely average 45-55hrs of work per week to avoid burn out.

A balanced lifestyle includes the ability to play sport and attend all trainings, the ability to explore the outdoors to go hunting, fishing and boating with friends and family. The ability to swap a Saturday afternoon milking to attend a friend's barbeque or the ability to attend young farmers club events and socialise with like-minded people.

Finally, I will leave you with a quote from Sir Richard Branson.

*“Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to.”*

Thank you