

The impact of management style

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The family farm usually includes the owner/operator, some family members, and possibly one or two other employees. As farms become larger and the business more complex, more time needs to be spent on management.

What are the qualities of a good manager? Perhaps a manager is someone who can bring out the best in other people. Think of a great manager that you have seen or read about, or a manager that you have met in the dairy industry.

What is your definition of the characteristics of a good manager?

The following are two models of people management:

1. **A controlling style of management** – The manager takes close control of staff, regularly issues instructions on what is to be done, and expects staff to report back when the job is done. They then issue the next instruction. They are not keen to delegate responsibility to staff, because that means relinquishing control and may lead to lower standards of work. They may have a basic belief that people only work because they have to, and therefore need to be constantly driven and told what to do; if you turn your back on them, they might slacken off or make mistakes. This style of manager generally makes all the decisions at work, and expects their staff to implement them. They become frustrated if the job is not done exactly as they would have done it themselves.
2. **A coaching style of management** – The manager sees their role as that of a guide or coach, to show staff what to do and how to do it, and then get out of their way and let them do it. They may have a basic belief that most people enjoy working, want to be good at what they do, and gain satisfaction from achievement at work. Managers of this style like to give the people they manage responsibility for their own actions, and allow them to show initiative, contribute ideas and make decisions. They will give their staff encouragement, guidance when needed and a pat on the back when they are doing well. They are not too concerned with how the job is done, so long as the desired outcome is achieved.

Which sort of manager would you rather work for?

These two styles of management are at opposite ends of the spectrum; in reality, most managers probably operate somewhere in between. Also, different situations may require different management styles.

Employees generally respond in different ways to different styles of management.

The following table summarises these styles.



Employee factors	Response to management by control	Response to management by coaching
Perceived role on farm	Staff wait for orders, and don't undertake tasks unless told to.	Staff are part of a shared work plan, and know what to do in advance.
Focus of effort	Clock watching, working to rules, knowing their rights.	Working toward accomplishing tasks and meeting goals.
Opinion about training	Staff do menial and repetitive jobs, do not show initiative, and have no incentive to better themselves.	Staff are encouraged to continually improve their skills, seek personal growth, and therefore feel valued and want to contribute.
Concerns	The boss watching over their shoulder, that they will make a mistake and get into trouble, that they won't finish work on time.	Not meeting expectations, how they can do the job better, what the next challenge will be.
Commitment to the job	Disinterested, unwilling to put in extra effort, work only the required hours, will leave if a better job comes along, compare their job to what others are getting.	Enthusiastic and motivated, enjoy their work, not daunted by problems or challenges, feel a sense of ownership about their work, are loyal to manager and identify with the business.
Productivity	Low to average, staff become reluctant to change or take on new challenges.	Higher and constantly improving, value-adding, desire for success, effort is rewarded.

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