

# Find and keep the right dairy staff

## Michael Ison

Livestock Officer – Dairy, Human Resources Management, Tocal, Paterson

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Here are the latest tips from the human resource industry to help you to improve the productivity of your farm.

### Always have a job description

No matter what the role on your farm – from feeding the calves to managing the breeding program – have a clear description of the job and what the individual will be responsible for.

### Target your job ad

If you need a person with specific skills, make sure you choose a publication that will target that person. For example, if you want a machinery specialist, try advertising in farm machinery publications. More general positions can be advertised in a local newspaper, which can be cheaper, and is sometimes just as successful in spreading the word that you are looking for someone.

### Decide if the position can be filled by a casual

Building up a pool of temporary staff is critical to helping with peak times and holidays. Make a list of the jobs on your farm that could be done on a part-time or casual basis. A good example is general farm maintenance. We all have jobs that don't get done because we're too busy; having someone come in regularly to 'tidy up' can prevent a lot of stress.

### References and referees are important

When interviewing, it is valuable to check references and call the referees. If a referee cannot give a strong recommendation, seek more information.

### Welcome people to your farm

When a new employee starts, show them the ropes. Discuss the farm and its goals, and how you are going about achieving them. Each farm has different ways of working, so provide some training. A great way to do this is to 'buddy' the new person up with someone who knows your farm.

### Involve your employees

Research has shown that job satisfaction is directly linked to whether individuals are included in decisions and have input into the long-term goals of the farm. This gives the individual ownership and control over the work they do.

### Money is not always the only incentive

Find out what motivates your workers. It may be different for each person. Money may be a motivator for some, but others may just need more flexible hours. Other rewards and benefits can be provided, such as child minding or time off to attend conferences and training.

### Evaluate your people regularly

People need both positive and negative feedback. When conducted well, discussions or interviews with staff about how they are going can encourage people in their work.

### Enforce strict 'absence' procedures

Consider writing down a list of policies about clocking on and off, sick leave, annual leave and punctuality. If this is provided when the person is inducted, and if it is regularly reviewed, turning up late for milking on a regular basis can be cleared up quickly.

### Find out why staff leave

When someone leaves your farm, find out why; understanding the reasons can help you retain staff. Also, a person who leaves on a positive note will not talk you down as an employer. Make a point of having a send-off when staff members leave.

More tips and information about The People in Dairy project can be found on the NSW DPI website: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

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