

DairyNZ is encouraging farmers to consider their recruitment needs for the coming season and take advantage of the 0800 Go Dairy campaign.



Farmers encouraged to piggyback on 0800 Go Dairy Campaign

The campaign is in its fourth year and started back on the air for six weeks from Sunday 10 February. DairyNZ Chief Executive, Tim Mackle, says the campaign presents an ideal opportunity for farmers to do their own advertising for staff to fill positions for the coming season.

"The Go Dairy campaign is the time when people all over the country are most likely to consider a career in dairy farming as an option simply because of the higher level of awareness it generates," he says.

"That means that farmers are likely to get a better response for their own recruitment needs at that time."

Dr Mackle says the screening of the new campaign comes at a time when dairy farmers are facing increasing labour shortages.

"The labour market is tight out there. At the end of last year, about 22% of employers were looking for staff. 13% reported the position vacant for over 6 months. 5% vacant for over 12 months.

"Population projections are also concerning, which show that over the next 20 years, the population in Southland will decrease by 11% and by 9% in Taranaki.

"However, this issue is not unique to dairying - labour shortages are a worldwide problem. In the next 25 years,

70 million people will retire in the OECD. There are only 5 million replacements.

"Tackling the New Zealand dairy industry's labour shortage will be a key focus for DairyNZ over the next few years. It's our job to help attract quality people to dairying and grow the diversity of talent and experience within our industry."

The Go Dairy campaign features real dairy farmers who made the decision to change their career after responding to previous campaigns. Their backgrounds include a software trainer, a baker, a mechanic, an engineer and a couple who had their own trucking contracting business.

Last year more than 3,500 calls were made to the 0800 Go Dairy line. About 1,000 of those were regarded as good prospects. Those that fit the bill are contacted by a client manager, who is a dairy farmer, and

are guided through the process of finding out more about dairy farming.

The aim of the campaign is to identify people with the right attitude and talent, and guide them through the process of finding their own job, making sure they understand the pitfalls and processes along the way. It is not a recruitment exercise.

For farmers looking for new staff, most of the Go Dairy respondents who are serious about a career in dairy farming will be encouraged to use the Fencepost website to look for work and list themselves on the 'work wanted' section.

For further information about the Go Dairy campaign, visit www.dairynz.co.nz or call 0800 4 DAIRYNZ.



REBECCA HORSHAM, RAKAIA
Ex mechanic and storekeeper

Rebecca started working on a dairy farm a year ago. She's built a strong relationship with her employers, who have supported her through training. At 21 Rebecca wants to be a herd manager by the end of the season. "By the time I'm 30 I could be running a million dollar business."



HELEN BOND, EKETAHUNA
Ex Software Trainer

When Helen called 0800GODAIRY she was at a crossroads in her life. She'd been working up to 80 hours a week in the city and decided she'd had enough. Her first dairy farm job in Eketahuna was a challenge, but she says she learned a great deal from the experience. Now she's second in charge on the farm next door and studying for a diploma.



MARK HODDER, CAMBRIDGE
Ex baker and courier driver

"It's never too late to give it a go," says Mark, who's 45 and loving working on a dairy farm. Every day is different and Mark loves the fact that he has to be a carpenter and a plumber to get everything done on the farm. "It's only a year out of your life to see whether or not you like it," he says.



STEVEN AND ANDREA BRACEY, TAHUNA
Ex engineer and personal trainer

Steven and Andrea decided to make a change in their lives and get out of the city. Steven got a job as herd manager of a 300 cow herd on a dairy farm in Waipu. Andrea carried on as a personal trainer with the occasional stint as relief milker. "Money isn't always the thing that keeps you fulfilled," says Steven. "Other values come to the fore - like happiness." In June this year they moved from Waipu to a sharemilking position near Tahuna in the Waikato and now own 250 cows.



ROB AND BEVERLEY URQUART, REPOROA
Ex self-employed trucking contractors

Today Rob and Beverley live and work on a large dairy farm near Reporoa. Both are gaining further qualifications through AgITO. "After we called the 0800 number we were walked through the various steps that were needed to make the move into dairying," says Rob. Now the Urquarts are happy with their lifestyle, working for a wage and doing hours they enjoy".

TIPS TO HELP FARMERS WITH RECRUITMENT

RECOGNISE THE DECISION HAS DOWNSTREAM EFFECTS

The recruitment decisions you make will affect the way the team works in the future. Make sure you understand the implications. If you hire someone with ambition you will need to give them responsibility - what are you prepared to give up? If you hire a 17 year old how much are you prepared to "mentor" them?

DON'T OVER-PROMISE

In the heat of the battle it's easy to make all sorts of promises. If you can't or worse, won't deliver on them, the person will leave and you'll have to go through the process all over again.

EXPECT TO TRAIN

With lots of new entrants to the industry and others being quickly promoted above their level of competence all employers should expect to have to invest time in training their team. Employers generally rate well for provision of off farm training. However, employees tell us they would value more on-farm training.

DO IT QUICKLY

The employment environment changes rapidly with the candidates being offered jobs very quickly. Long gaps between advertising and decision making usually mean that good candidates are offered jobs before you get back to them.

PAST BEHAVIOUR IS THE BEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE BEHAVIOUR

Reference checking is essential, as is a CV that gives a detailed job history allowing you to spot employment patterns.

KEEP IN CONTACT

With many jobs filled well in advance of a start date it pays to keep in contact with your new team member to make sure they are still committed to the job.