



# Stepping Stones

Career pathways in the Murray Dairy Industry

## Stepping Stones

Australia's dairy farmers are highly-skilled professionals who are proud and passionate about their industry.

The Australian dairy industry offers a large variety of fulfilling careers and education opportunities that can progress throughout a dairy career.

The important thing about planning your career is that you need to choose the right pathway for you.

Stepping Stones provides information on the different types of careers and explores the many pathways available for people looking to start a career on a dairy farm, or for experienced people who want to progress their dairy career further.

Read dairy farmer profiles from around Australia, advice on dairy careers, progression and great career tips from farmers. Whether you want work on a dairy farm or own your own property, Stepping Stones can help you find the pathway to achieve your career goal.

You can read about farmers like Hayden Allsop, a full time Assistant Farm Hand who enjoys the variety of his job and providing input into farm decisions. Hayden is a member of Murray Dairy's Young Dairy Network and is studying towards completing a Cert IV in Agriculture, with plans to take on share farming as he progresses his dairy career.

Or you can learn about Victoria Mulcahy, a Farm Business Manager who was born into dairy. Her family operate KyValley Dairy Group, one of Australia's largest family owned dairy operations. After completing a Diploma of Agronomy and an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture, Victoria realised her childhood dream and worked in America. Returning to Australia, Victoria has transitioned from Operations Manager to Farm Business Manager with her dad's support as he steps back from the business. Her role involves problem solving, human resource management and plenty of hands on daily farm work. In the near future, Victoria and her sister hope to co-own and operate a dairy farm together.

**Stepping Stones can be downloaded from:**  
**[www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingstones](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingstones)**

## Why Dairy?

### Dairy is important

For almost 200 years, Australia's dairy farmers have been producing the dairy foods we enjoy every day. These high-quality products are consumed by millions of Australians and sold around the world.

The Australian dairy industry is a \$13 billion farm, manufacturing and export industry. It is a major employer and contributes billions of dollars to the Australian economy. The dairy industry is a vital contributor to regional Australian communities – it creates jobs, provides food and supports the local economy.

About 1400 dairy farms in Murray Dairy produce around 2.2 billion litres of milk a year, which equates to 22% of Australia's milk production\*.

### A career for life

The Australian dairy industry offers real opportunities for people who want to build a career rather than just have a job – dairy provides a career for life.

Australia's dairy farmers are skilled, innovative professionals who are passionate about their industry. They are committed to the health and wellbeing of their animals, land and communities, and are involved in all phases of the dairy industry whether it is on farm, or off.

The industry offers flexibility and work/life balance, and there is always something new to learn – building, computer operations, plumbing, nutrition, agronomy, machine operating, driving tractors, and looking after an animal's welfare – to just name a few!

New technology on dairy farms, such as automated (robotic) milking is providing the opportunity for a different way to manage dairy farms. Cows are milked automatically, and the farmer manages the process and the information generated through the system. Smaller scale dairy operations are an important focus for these automated operations.

The dairy industry creates careers for life – it is a progressive and technologically advanced industry with world-leading practices.

### You can get qualified

Dairy industry education and training is practical, and courses relate to what you do on the farm. You can continue to build on your qualifications as you work and there are opportunities to learn about specialist areas.

Industry training is provided through a combination of formal (accredited) and informal programs offered through Dairy Australia, tertiary and vocational education, and regional programs like Murray Dairy.

Qualifications provide a pathway to reach your career goals and the qualifications you gain will be nationally recognised, which means you can take them anywhere in Australia.

### Dairy Australia

03 9694 3777

[www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

[www.thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au)

### Murray Dairy

03 5833 5312

[www.murraydairy.com.au](http://www.murraydairy.com.au)

*\*Murray Dairy People Factfinder 2013*



## Planning your pathway

Career progression and pathway planning is the key to reaching your career goals. You may be starting in the dairy industry, wanting to progress further or wishing to progress to more senior farm positions.

The model on page 3 gives an example overview of what your pathway planning should look like.

And remember, sometimes planning your pathway may seem daunting, so break it into pieces and focus on each goal ahead, one step at a time!

### Step One: Where are you now?

Don't just think about your current knowledge or job – consider the skills you have; your interests, the way you behave at work, your general attitude to your job, your workplace and the dairy industry in general.

- Do you like to work outdoors?
- Do you like working with people, animals and/or machinery? What are your non-work based skills, hobbies or interests? What is your education level?
- Do you have any specific work-based skills?
- Have you completed industry training or courses?
- What type of work do you do, you have any previous experience or training?
- What is your life like outside of work?

### Step Two: Where do you want to go?

Once you recognise your skills and interests, think about the career pathways that may suit you.

Remember, you might not want to move out of the job you already have, but you may want to learn how to do it better or plan for the future.

- Think about the type of work you really want to do, and why
- Consider the long term, not just your short term needs
- Consider fields of work that match who you are, your interests, and your current skill-set
- Are you looking for career advancement?
- Do you have, or need specialist skills or training to reach your goals?

### Step Three: Plan your journey

A career pathway is all about focusing on the journey, not just the destination.

You can continue to progress, gain experience and skills right throughout your career, and having a clear pathway helps to achieve your goals.

- Have you planned long term goals?
- Consider study options, training and specialist courses that will help you achieve your goals
- What industry programs can you get involved with?
- Set realistic goals!

### Step Four: Ask for advice

It's your career pathway – seek out information and speak to people who can offer tips and advice.

You can learn about the different jobs available on a dairy farm in this booklet – read the job profiles and the farmer case studies for some great progression tips.

- Talk to people in the industry for advice on how to reach your career goals\*
- If you're at school, talk to career advisors and teachers
- Contact training organisations, read course guides and learn about industry programs
- Get involved in Dairy Australia and Murray Dairy programs
- Learn about dairy industry scholarships

### Contacts for further information

#### Dairy Australia

[www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

#### Murray Dairy

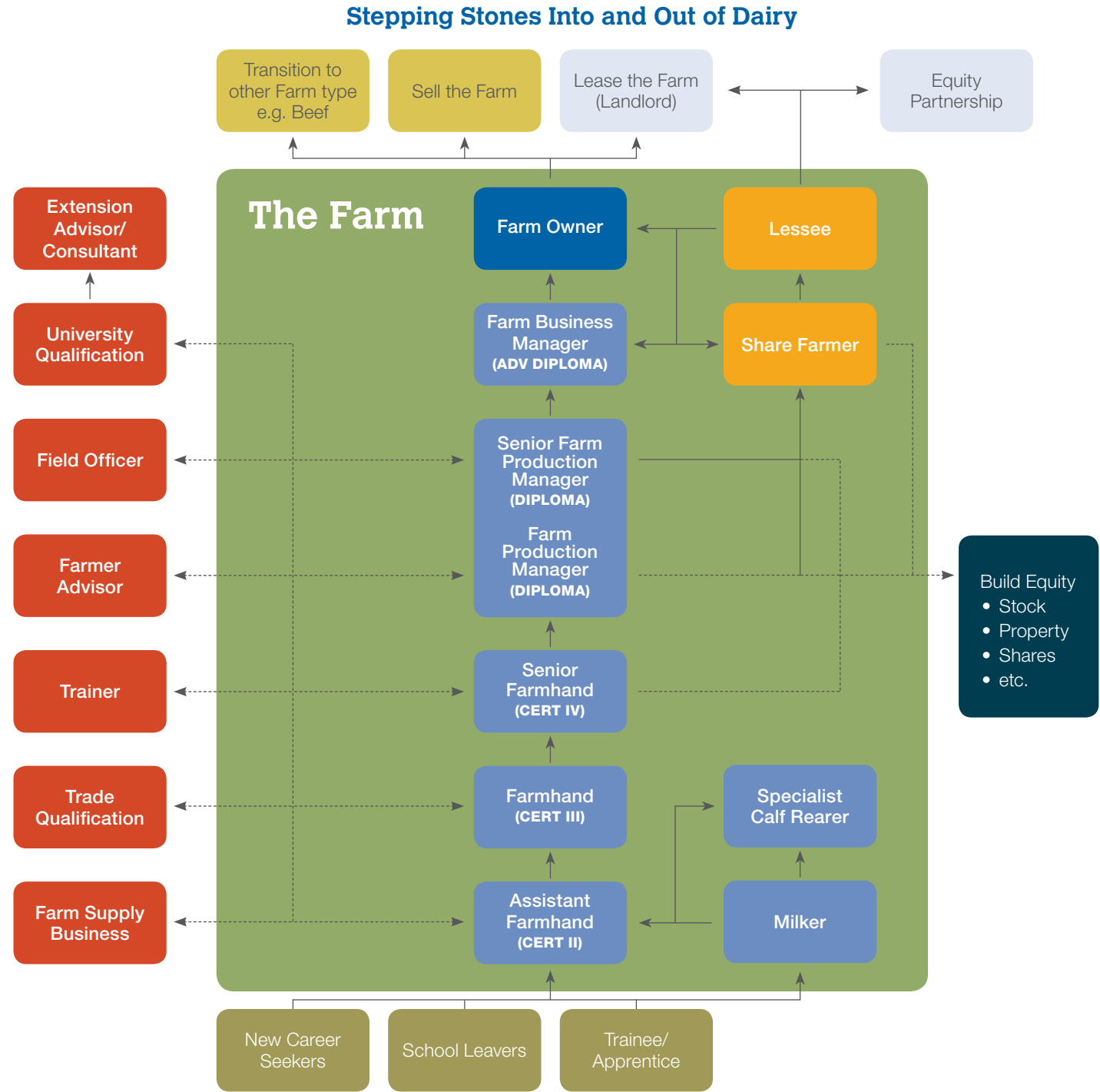
[www.murraydairy.com.au](http://www.murraydairy.com.au)

*\*Murray Dairy has a network of mentors who may be able to help.*



Dairy Pathways

Stepping Stones is all about showing you the many pathways that are available in the Australian dairy industry. You may be thinking now about starting a career as a trainee on a dairy farm, however one day, you may have the potential to operate your own dairy farm. Or you could be currently working in the industry and are looking for opportunities to progress your position to a more senior role. The model shows a number of pathways on how to enter and progress your career in the Australian dairy industry, including qualifications at each stage.









**Natasha Jennings**  
**Relief Milker, Toolamba**

Natasha Jennings grew up on a small beef farm next door to a dairy. From Toolamba, in Victoria's Goulburn Valley region, Natasha has been dairy farming for 11 years.

"I'm proud of the work that I do. It is an evolving industry - it takes hard work, a certain intellect and a passion for what you do."

Natasha loved visiting her neighbour's dairy. She enjoyed helping with calf feeding which led to being offered a job as a Relief Milker, "I continued to milk most weekends during high school, on and off through university, in between traveling overseas and up until now" she said.

Natasha works at Waranga Downs, a 900 acre farm that milks 315 cows alongside 4 Relief Milkers and a Farmhand. She is responsible for part time calf feeding and relief milking and works outside of these roles, as needed.

"When milking, my responsibility is to set up the dairy. Normally another Milker brings in the herd from the paddock and as they arrive, I start up the dairy and begin milking" she said.

As part of her role, Natasha also helps with calf raising. She arrives early to feed the calves; a new calf requires colostrum and often needs assistance drinking from a bottle. The calf will then be guided to drink from a bucket and then graduate from the calf shed to a small paddock to drink from a trough.

Natasha believes the qualities required to perform her job are patience, a calm nature and keen observation. She also appreciates that the role has some challenges, such as maintaining calf health.

"One of the most important things is to be patient. If you remain calm, the energy will be reflected in the herd's behaviour towards you and the ease of handling the herd," she said. "Being observant and learning the signs of a sick or calving cow is also

extremely important - the simplest things like the order the cows come into the dairy can be highly useful in helping detect cows starting to get sick or cows that are on heat."

Natasha loves her job; she is always learning and feels a sense of achievement when the calves grow into healthy and strong cows. She also appreciates the role's flexibility, as it allows her to work part time while being a full time mum.

"I find the work rewarding and it's a lot more interesting than what people may think. When it involves getting a job done whilst watching the sunrise, it can even be therapeutic," she said. "Every milking offers new information about herd health and milk productivity, especially if you have an interest to ask questions."

Natasha is unsure what path her career in the dairy industry will take, however she is keen to keep learning and growing in the dairy industry.

"What I have found to be valuable to enjoying my work is to always be open to new information and ideas, it not only keeps the job interesting – it also means you are always improving and evolving as an employee. I hope this trait also helps to keep me employable."

**Natasha's tips:**

- Never assume you know everything. Be open to new information and ideas.
- Don't be afraid of early mornings and hard work, it's extremely rewarding.
- It's important to always do your best and don't take short cuts.
- There is always something to do when working on a farm, so keeping busy is easy!



Relief Milker or Milker							
The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<p>Typical Day – rostered for early starts, time off during the day, then evening milking.</p> <p>Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — check, start and operate the dairy</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses</li> <li>• Assist in the clean up of the milking shed</li> <li>• Assist with collecting cows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like working with animals</li> <li>• Like working as part of a team</li> <li>• Like working outdoors</li> <li>• Like working with machinery</li> <li>• Happy to start early and to finish in the evening</li> <li>• Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting</li> <li>• Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and care with the animals</li> <li>• Ability to take initiative and work independently</li> <li>• Being a team player</li> <li>• Taking pride in the work and workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This role can be a casual role or a part time contract</li> <li>• <b>The minimum pay rate is \$19.49 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2019 – noting rates are reviewed annually)</b></li> <li>• Flexible hours which may suit your lifestyle</li> </ul>	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<p>For Relief Milker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cups on Cups Off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Calf Rearer</li> <li>• Assistant Farmhand</li> </ul> <p><b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role</li> <li>• Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand</li> </ul>

\*Check the latest pay rates at [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates)



## Ashleigh Gamble Calf Rearer, Bamawm

Ashleigh was born and bred on a dairy farm. Her parents own and operate a 320 cow, 350 acre dairy at Bamawm, where Ashleigh has worked as a full time Calf Rearer for 12 months.

After finishing school, Ashleigh moved to Melbourne to study beauty therapy before returning to the family farm to work alongside her parents and brother, who works as a Senior Farmhand.

"We have a nine day roster which works really well," Ashleigh said. "In the first week, everyone is working on the farm - my parents, my brother and me. My brother and I have the first weekend off. Everyone is back on Monday or Tuesday and then my parents take the second weekend off. We also hire a casual Milker who works weekends."

As a Calf Rearer, Ashleigh's role involves waking up at 5am every day to milk. She monitors and feeds the calves and calving cows and then works on the farm doing general farm work. Ashleigh finds her role rewarding as it allows her to build a strong connection with the calves.

She is involved in the healthcare of the calves and witnesses them wean and grow into healthy cows. "I enjoy watching the calves grow. When they get older and go to the paddock, they still remember me and come up for a pat," Ashleigh said.

"To be a Calf Rearer, you have to be interested in animals. You monitor the calves every day - you can't just feed them and leave the pen - you need to be really observant. You're building a relationship with them. I interact with them so they get used to human contact from an early age."

No two days are the same and Ashleigh is always learning on the job. Each year, the Gamble family host Melbourne school students who visit the farm to learn

about the operation's recycled water irrigation system.

"Listening to my parents talk about the farm at the dinner table, there is a lot for me to learn and grasp!" Ashleigh said. "The dairy industry is so challenging - it's always evolving and changing. There's never a dull moment and always opportunities to grow and build."

Outside of work, Ashleigh is currently studying the final year of a University teaching degree. She is also involved in Murray Dairy's Young Dairy Network, a group of local young dairy farmers who meet, socialise and discuss farm issues.

"The Young Dairy Network has events where we can discuss topics like calf rearing and a vet will explain how to do things. They also have Field Days where we learn how other people operate their farms. At each discussion group, we talk about what the next topic should be- for example, if silage season is coming up, we can plan a discussion on silage to talk about what we should be doing and why."

In the short term, Ashleigh is planning to complete a dairy milking course to further build her skills and aims to finish her teaching degree.

### Ashleigh's tips:

- Consider doing VCAL at school to build your networks and contacts in the dairy industry.
- Get in contact with a farmer and tell them that you want to learn.





Calf Rearer							
The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
Tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeding calves</li> <li><b>Wellbeing of calves</b> — monitoring their health, vaccination, treating animals</li> <li>Assist in the clean up of the calf rearing shed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 6 months experience in rearing calves</li> <li>Like working with young animals</li> <li>'Self starter' — able to work unsupervised</li> <li>Like working outdoors</li> <li>Capable of handling calves</li> <li>Happy to start early and to finish in the evening</li> <li>Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patience and care with animals</li> <li>Ability to take initiative and work independently</li> <li>High level of organising skills</li> <li>Taking pride in the work and the calf rearing facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This role can be a casual role or a part time contract</li> <li>The minimum pay rate is \$19.49 per hour (from first pay period starting 1 July 2019 – noting rates are reviewed annually)</li> </ul>	Every Dairy Region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	For Calf Rearing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rearing Healthy Calves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driver's licence</li> <li>Transport</li> </ul>	<b>Roles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Farm Hand</li> <li>Farmhand</li> </ul>
							<b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 1 years experience for Farmhand role</li> <li>Up to 1 month experience for Assistant Farmhand</li> </ul>

\*Check the latest pay rates at [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates)

## Hayden Allsop Assistant Farmhand, Dederang

Hayden Allsop grew up on a beef farm, yet dairy soon sparked his interest.

“We lived in Wodonga and then my parents moved to a 150 acre beef farm at Dederang,” Hayden said. “My Grandfather and my Mum’s side of the family were all dairy farmers, and I started to become more and more interested in dairy.”

During high school, Hayden started relief milking and when he was 16 years old he commenced a farm apprenticeship on a dairy at Kergunyah. “I was working Monday to Friday doing general Farmhand work and I had weekends off,” he said. “I would milk in the morning, do farm work during the day and then milk again at night.”

Hayden completed the apprenticeship as well as a Certificate III in Agriculture within 2 years. Looking for new opportunities, Hayden visited his parent’s neighbour and dairy farm owner, Stuart Crosthwaite, to ask if he knew of any jobs available in the area.

“I asked Stuart if there were any jobs going and it turned out that he was looking for someone. I’ve been working there for almost a year now,” Hayden said.

With milking peaking at 400 cows and calving twice a year, as a full time Assistant Farmhand, Hayden is required to complete a range of tasks to ensure the farm is run smoothly every day - from milking cows to general farmhand work, like driving tractors, farm maintenance and feeding.

Hayden enjoys his job; he especially likes learning from Stuart and having input in farm decisions. “I like working together as a team with Stuart and having input in some decisions. If we have different ideas, we sit down and discuss it. Stuart has the final say but it’s always good to have my option out there and I like getting feedback from him to see if I’m doing the right thing.”

Outside of work, Hayden likes to catch up with friends and he plays AFL footy for Dederang. He is also a member of Murray Dairy’s Young Dairy Network, a group of young farmers who meet, socialise and learn from other farmers in the region.

“The Young Dairy Network is great for people who are in the same position that I’m in and trying to make a career in the industry,” Hayden said. “Last year, we went on a study trip to Gippsland to see how farms are run in another area. There were farmers who started where we started and now have cows, own their own farm or are leasing.”

In the short term, Hayden is working towards completing a Certificate IV of Agriculture, while his long term goal is to steadily progress his career in the dairy industry. “I’d like to progress through the ranks and I’d love to go into share farming one day – maybe in several years time,” Hayden said. “I’m trying to figure out if I’d like to remain share farming, own my own farm or lease a farm – there’s definitely plenty of options in the dairy industry.”

### Hayden’s tip:

- As an Assistant Farmhand, you have to make sure everything is done on the farm as efficiently as possible.
- Nobody says, “you can’t do it”, anyone can start working in the industry helping on a farm. We all have to start somewhere.
- The more you know, the more experience you have - there are courses and certificates you can complete.





## Assistant Farmhand

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — collecting the cows from the paddock</li> <li>• Milk cows in the shed with a more experienced person</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — identify and treat common animal health problems, identify, record and care for newborn calves</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — load and feed</li> <li>• Feed out hay or silage using machinery</li> <li>• Implement cleaning and maintenance under supervision</li> <li>• Implement milking quality assurance procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like working with animals</li> <li>• Like working as part of a team</li> <li>• Like working outdoors</li> <li>• Like working with machinery, and can operate equipment (e.g. tractor) under supervision</li> <li>• Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included</li> <li>• Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting</li> <li>• Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and care with the animals</li> <li>• Take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe</li> <li>• Ability to take initiative and work independently</li> <li>• Being a team player</li> <li>• Taking pride in the work and workplace</li> </ul>	Around \$32,000 to \$45,000	Every Dairy Region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	For Assistant Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cert III in Agriculture</li> <li>• Cups on Cups Off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>	<div> <b>Roles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Calf Rearer</li> <li>• Senior Farmhand</li> </ul> </div> <div> <b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 1 years experience for Calf Rearer role</li> <li>• Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand</li> <li>• Completed Cert II in Agriculture</li> </ul> </div>

## Tahnee King Farmhand, Girgarre

Tahnee has been a Farmhand for over 3 years. Originally from Toowoomba, Queensland, Tahnee worked in Western Victoria before moving to Girgarre 16 months ago.

“Both of my parents grew up on Jersey farms - they chose careers outside the dairy industry. My exposure to dairying was through my uncle and other dairy farms within the family,” she said.

During school holidays, Tahnee helped out on her uncle’s farm which sparked her interest in showing cows – a passion that has led her to attend many events across Australia, including the National All Dairy Breeds Youth Camp 4 times!

After finishing year 12, Tahnee continued to work as a Farmhand on dairies throughout southeast Queensland and completed a Diploma of Agriculture. She worked as a Project Officer for Austock Rural and as an Animal Attendant at Queensland’s Department of Primary Industries’ Tick Fever Centre. In early 2009, Tahnee was granted a World Jersey Cattle Bureau Youth Travel Scholarship that enabled her to work on a range of jersey farms for 6 months across Canada. She gained vital work experience and attended world cattle events, allowing her to further build her industry knowledge.

In 2010, Tahnee moved from Queensland to Warrnambool and worked as a Product Development Officer with ABS Australia in the area of dairy cattle genetics. While in Warrnambool, Tahnee undertook the dairy industry’s premier leadership program, Developing Dairy Leaders. The program allowed Tahnee to build industry leadership skills.

In 2014, Tahnee decided to move north to Victoria’s Goulburn Valley region and accept a Farmhand position on the Nicholson family dairy located at Girgarre; “my working relationship with my current employers began over 10 years ago when I first

began attending dairy youth camps,” she said. “In the years following, I began working with the Nicholson family at shows and Jersey Club sales.”

The farm milks 550 cows on 500 acres. As a full time Farmhand, Tahnee is required to complete a range of hands on tasks to ensure the farm is running smoothly - including milking, heard health, tractor operations, harvesting, feeding dry stock, feeding calves and general farm maintenance. Tahnee enjoys being a Farmhand as she can work outdoors, with animals. She likes being part of a team, working alongside 4 full time employees and a relief milker.

To be Farmhand, Tahnee believes a person must have a strong work ethic, good animal husbandry skills and attention to detail. They also must be reliable, punctual and willing to learn.

Outside of work, Tahnee is still passionate about showing cows and enjoys travelling, playing tennis and kayaking. She is involved in the local industry through Murray Dairy’s Young Dairy Network (YDN), the Northern District Jersey Breeders Club, and is looking forward to joining a newly established Murray Dairy discussion group.

“It’s important to keep developing. I’m always keen to learn and undertake courses being offered by the local YDN and other industry institutions,” she said.

In the future, Tahnee would like to one day become a Farm Owner. “Like many other young people in the dairy industry, my ideal long term ambition involves carrying out roles that eventually lead to farm ownership,” she said, “these positions include Herd or Farm Manager, followed by Share Farming or Leasing.”

### Tahnee’s tip:

To enter the dairy industry: spend school holidays and/or weekends volunteering on dairy farms to gain experience, knowledge and ask lots of questions.





Farmhand							
The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — check, start and operate the dairy unassisted.</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — identify cows with mastitis, teat damage, lameness and other illnesses. Manage the program for cows due to calve, regularly observe and attend to animal health needs, assist in calving cows.</li> <li>• Carry out farm vaccination and drenching programs</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — determine pasture availability and oversee its allocation</li> <li>• Operate and maintain feeding equipment</li> <li>• Implement farm pest and weed programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like working with animals</li> <li>• Like working as part of a team</li> <li>• Like working outdoors</li> <li>• Like working with machinery</li> <li>• Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included</li> <li>• Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting</li> <li>• Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and care with the animals</li> <li>• Able to take responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe</li> <li>• Ability to take initiative and work independently</li> <li>• Being a team player</li> <li>• Taking pride in the work and workplace</li> <li>• Can work independently and follow farm procedures</li> </ul>	Around \$33,000 to \$50,000	Every Dairy Region has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	For Farmhand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cert III in Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Keep saving</li> <li>• Look at the option of raising stock</li> </ul> <a href="http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/calfcosts.htm">www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/calfcosts.htm</a>	<div> <b>Roles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Farmhand</li> </ul> </div> <div> <b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 2 years experience for Senior Farmhand</li> <li>• Completed Cert III in Agriculture</li> </ul> </div>

## Emily Schultz Senior Farmhand, Waldara

Emily Schultz is passionate about dairy farming. From Waldara, just outside of Wangaratta, Emily's grandparents were dairy farmers and her father owns beef cattle.

While in year 9, Emily started a 2 year school based apprenticeship working 2 days on a dairy while attending school 3 days a week. In her final years of school, Emily completed VCAL and got a job relief milking on John Howard's dairy farm at Oxley, where she gained a grounding of farm work.

While completing VCAL, Emily also worked as a Baker. "I milked part time for 4 years and all through my apprenticeship. Once I finished my apprenticeship, I became a permanent part time Milker," she said. "When I finished school, I got another job as a Farmhand and Relief Milker at Milawa. I gave up baking and worked half a week at the farm at Oxley and half a week at Milawa."

This provided Emily with a great learning experience, "they farmed differently and were in different environments, so I learnt a lot in a short period of time."

After 2 years Emily, was offered a full time job at Invergordon, near Shepparton. She worked on the farm for 8 months and gained valuable experience. She was then offered a full time position on Johnny Pethybridge's farm at Whorouly.

Emily has worked with Johnny for 2 years, milking 250 cows on 1600 acres. As a Senior Farmhand, her role includes a range of seasonal jobs such as milking, calf rearing and feeding, paddock work and harvesting, farm maintenance, tractor work, herd health and animal welfare.

"I've learnt a lot working with Johnny. I love milking and tractor work and I get to do a bit of everything" Emily said. "I'm lucky - not many people get to take their dog to work and do what they love everyday!"

Emily appreciates there are some challenges in her role such as monitoring herd health. "Everyday you don't know what to expect. Johnny has jobs lined up, however you can never really plan a day because you don't know what's going to happen – you just have to deal with the situation and use your initiative."

Emily believes to be a Senior Farmhand a person must be responsible, reliable and trustworthy. She has a good working relationship with Johnny, whom she continues to learn from. "We work well together - it's a good working environment and Johnny listens to my ideas. He keeps me in the loop with the business which makes me feel more involved."

Over several years, Emily has completed a range of industry qualifications. She started with the Certificate II Agriculture while at school and progressively completed study up to Certificate IV in Agriculture. She then completed the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Agriculture. Emily is also a member of Murray Dairy's Young Dairy Network and attends information days and courses when she can.

Emily's goal is to keep building her assets. "At this stage, I'm investing in beef cattle with my Dad and then when I become financially better off, I'll see what my options are," she said. "I could sell the cattle and buy a dairy herd. I could then lease or share farm – I'm not sure yet, there are so many options."

### Emily's tips:

- Finish year 12 – there are opportunities to do Apprenticeships and learn a trade while at school.
- There are people who are willing to help if you're trying to get into the dairy industry.
- There are lots of courses and programs you can do through Murray Dairy – and you can meet new friends.





## Senior Farmhand

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — organise and oversee staff involved in the dairy operation, oversee the milk quality assurance program and OH&amp;S program</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — administer drenches, vaccines, mineral supplements and other appropriate animal husbandry</li> <li>• Monitor the reproductive performance of the herd</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — set up, operate and monitor concentrate feed equipment, determine the most appropriate time to graze fodder crops</li> <li>• <b>Pasture Production and Cropping</b> – determine paddock rotation for optimum pasture utilisation, follow weed management policy</li> <li>• <b>Plant Equipment and Infrastructure Maintenance</b> – oversee the maintenance program for farm vehicles, equipment and implements</li> <li>• Supervise the OH+S practices on farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like working with animals</li> <li>• Like working as part of a team</li> <li>• Like working outdoors</li> <li>• Like working with machinery</li> <li>• Happy to work as part of the farm roster with weekend work included</li> <li>• Able to stand and work for extended periods during milk harvesting</li> <li>• Honesty and reliability, for example, turning up for work on time</li> <li>• Be computer literate in regard to report writing and financial management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and care with the animals</li> <li>• Ability to take initiative and work independently</li> <li>• Being a team player</li> <li>• Taking pride in the work and workplace</li> <li>• Be able to supervise staff and staff training</li> <li>• Communication skills and the ability to resolve conflicts</li> </ul>	<p>Around \$40,000 to \$50,000</p>	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• <b>Industry Leadership programs</b></li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<p>For Senior Farmhand/ Farm Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cert IV in Agriculture</li> <li>• Cups on Cups Off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Keep building your dairy assets</li> <li>• Keep building stock</li> <li>• Think about farm equipment purchases</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm Production Manager</li> </ul> <p><b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 3-5 years experience for Farm Production Manager</li> <li>• Completed Cert IV in Agriculture</li> </ul>

## Jason Reeve Farm Production Manager, Finley

Jason Reeve has been a full time dairy farmer for 22 years. Hailing from the north island of New Zealand, Jason grew up on a family dairy farm that milked 280 cows on 260 hectares.

When Jason finished school, he progressively completed study up to the Level 5 Certificate of Agriculture, while working full time on the family dairy farm. He worked as a Farmhand for 2 years before leaving to work on other dairies in range of positions to widen his experience.

“Working on other farms gave me a different perspective - I could see how other farmers worked. This helped me to Share Farm for 3 years on another farm before going back to the family farm as a Share Farmer.”

Jason was seeking a new job opportunity and decided to make the trip across the Tasman; “I thought I’d give Australia a go and I was picked up by Jenny and Malcolm,” he said.

Jason has been working with Jenny Wheeler and Malcolm Holm for 18 months. Based at Finley, the farm has a 720 cow herd on 1500 acres. “It’s been a bit of an eye opener; the water situation is a big difference, as is the grain feeding and mixing ration over summer as there’s no grass. It took me 6 months to get my head around that. Now I’m comfortable and Malcolm trusts that I’m going to do the job properly.”

Jason has a positive working relationship with Jenny and Malcolm that he values highly “I honestly don’t think I could have landed on a better farm. Malcolm’s putting our Assistant Manager through a Certificate IV; allowing her to move up to Herd Manager and I will progress to Farm Manager. Malcolm is great - if you’re not sure about something, he’ll help you through it and he’s a very good employer.”

There is something different to do daily, monthly and seasonally on the farm. Jason believes to be a Farm Production Manager, a person must be dedicated and committed to the position.

In his role, Jason must ensure the farm is run smoothly. Each day he wakes up early to milk the cows. After breakfast, he completes a variety of seasonal farm duties including assessing grass and monitoring cow health, and in the afternoon he milks again before going home.

Jason oversees 3 full time employees including an Assistant Manager, who is in charge of managing the dairy. Jason also engages industry specialists who visit the farm to advise on grass as well as cow health.

Jason enjoys his job; he especially likes being able to work outdoors and with animals. He acknowledges that dairy farming has challenges; his main challenges are monitoring cow health, retaining employees, and ensuring all tasks are always performed to a high standard.

Outside of work, Jason is involved in the local industry. He attends Murray Dairy discussion groups and focus farms which he finds valuable. Jenny and Malcolm’s property also hosts local farmers to discuss the farm’s calf rearing facilities.

“I think it’s interesting to see how other people farm. No one’s the same - it’s nice to see someone else’s farm and how they run it, what they have learnt, and also what they have learnt from the mistakes that they’ve made,” Jason said.

With a love of the farming lifestyle, Jason’s aim is to continue progressing his career to reach his goal of Share Farming. “I’m very happy at the moment,” he said. “I’d like to take full control of the farm and then I’ll look at Share Farming in another 2-3 years.”

### Jason’s tips:

- Study: complete qualifications and courses
- Be dedicated and committed to your job.
- Progress and move forward - it’s the natural growth of the dairy industry.





## Farm Production Manager

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — Identify and correct problems in the machine function and operation</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — select cows for AI and assist with bull selection, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — set the rotation and oversee the delivery to all livestock, oversee the sourcing and reticulation of water to livestock to meet their requirements</li> <li>• <b>Pasture Production and Cropping</b> – determine the soil fertiliser program using soil fertility and production data, determine nitrogen applications based on seasonal conditions</li> <li>• <b>Plant Equipment and Infrastructure Maintenance</b> – maintain and develop paddock infrastructure including fencing, water troughs, laneways and drainage, implement the dairy maintenance schedule including the replacement of rubberware, machine testing and maintenance</li> <li>• <b>Administration</b> – ensure the farm is compliant with workplace legislation, organise rosters and allocate tasks</li> <li>• <b>Staff management recruitment</b> – recruitment, selection, induction, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management</li> <li>• Minimum of a Certificate IV in Agriculture (or equivalent)</li> <li>• High level people management skills</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</li> <li>• Take responsibility for farm performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff management and leadership</li> <li>• Communicate with farm workers and source goods &amp; services external to the business</li> <li>• Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting</li> <li>• High level of responsibility and decision making</li> <li>• Negotiation skills &amp; conflict management</li> <li>• Troubleshooting skills</li> <li>• Liaise and gather ideas outside the farm</li> </ul>	Around \$60,000 to \$75,000	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<p>For Farm Production Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma of Agriculture</li> <li>• Cert IV in Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Asset building to continue</li> <li>• Keep building stock and herd improvement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm Business Manager</li> <li>• Share Farmer</li> <li>• Farm Owner</li> </ul>
							<p><b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 2 years experience for Business Manager role</li> <li>• Resources and up to 5 years experience for Share Farmer or ownership role</li> <li>• Completed Diploma of Agriculture</li> </ul>

## Victoria Mulcahy Farm Business Manager, Kyabram

Victoria was born into dairy. Her family operate one of Australia's largest family owned dairy operations, KyValley Dairy Group, which includes 3 dairy farms and a milk processing plant; "As a child, I followed Dad around the farm and started milking on weekends and after school as soon as possible," she said.

During year 12, Victoria completed a Diploma of Dairy Agriculture and became Herd Manager of the family's 1300 cow farm. When she finished school, Victoria completed an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture and Diploma of Agronomy over 12 months. She then returned to the family farm and worked second in charge to her Dad.

"My childhood dream was to work in America, so I got an internship with the University of Ohio" she said. "I spent 9 months on a farm in Florida with 130 employees, milking 5000 cows with 8000 head of stock. I had to change my whole way of thinking as I went from management to student level."

When Victoria returned to Australia, she milked part time for different dairies. In 2014, she returned full time to the family farm as Operations Manager, slowly transitioning to Farm Business Manager. "Dad wants to step back physically in the business so there's an opportunity for me. I have his support and he helps me to make the right decisions," she said.

Victoria likes that the role offers flexibility, daily challenges and variety. Problem solving is a large part of her role and she is always looking at how to plan for the future.

"A lot of my work is in Human Resources - training people, doing rosters, recognising people's strengths and the areas they are best suited to work in. Our on farm departments each have a Manager - herd, feed, paddock, dairy and calf. It's my job to help and make sure they reach their goals and meet budgets."

"A Board runs the business and we have management meetings for planning, to resolve issues, manage situations and plan for the future."

Victoria also covers employee leave and helps with milking, feed and irrigation. "As a Manager, it's important to continue to do daily jobs so I know what's happening and to help make better decisions."

Victoria believes to be a Farm Business Manager a person must be open minded, have a broad knowledge of the industry and good people skills. Outside of work, she attends Murray Dairy information days and has set up a Kyabram Young Farmers group. "I always try to send staff to days I think will be relevant. We're really lucky we have all these facilities for our staff and us - there's a lot of resources in the dairy industry."

In the future, Victoria is hoping to co-own and operate a business with her younger sister who is also in agriculture. "Our plan is to start a dairy farm together in the next few years - it's a challenge that we want to take on."

### Victoria's tips:

- If you want to work in a management role, you have to look beyond what you're doing now; you need to have the skills and knowledge to look and plan for the future.
- Dairy is a very rewarding career both financially and as a lifestyle. You can work outdoors, the days are not structured, and there are different things happening all the time.
- There's a lot of support if you're not from a farming family and for young people - there are farmers who are willing to take on young people and train them. Murray Dairy run courses, discussion and young farmer groups.





## Farm Business Manager

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business</li> <li><b>Milk Harvesting</b> — Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques</li> <li><b>Animal Husbandry</b> — organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff</li> <li><b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations</li> <li><b>Pasture Production and Cropping</b> — determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers</li> <li><b>Plant Equipment and Infrastructure Maintenance</b> – maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas</li> <li><b>Administration</b> — manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management</li> <li>Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent)</li> <li>High level people management skills</li> <li>High level Business Management skills</li> <li>Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</li> <li>Take responsibility for farm performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business</li> <li>Staff management and leadership</li> <li>Communicate with farm workers and source goods &amp; services external to the business</li> <li>Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting</li> <li>High level of responsibility and decision making</li> <li>Negotiation skills &amp; conflict management</li> </ul>	Around \$90,000 to \$120,000	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li><b>Industry Leadership programs</b></li> <li>Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<p>For Farm Production Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diploma of Agriculture</li> <li>Cert IV in Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driver's licence</li> <li>Transport</li> <li>Asset building and looking at other wealth creation opportunities (e.g. purchasing and leasing out a flat or house)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share Farmer</li> <li>Farm Owner</li> </ul> <p><b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources and up to 5 years experience for Share Farmer or ownership role</li> <li>Completed Diploma of Agriculture</li> </ul>

## James Shepherd Share Farmer, Kyabram

Originally from New Zealand, James moved to Victoria when he was 15 years old and is Share Farming on his parent's dairy farm at Kyabram.

"I'm in my second year of Share Farming, I like everything about it," he said. "Managing the grass, feeding the cows, seeing the young stock progress, even the managing and organising side of the job – I love it all."

After finishing school, James completed a Diploma of Agriculture and travelled for a few years before returning to the 700 cow family farm, where he worked as Assistant Manager for 3 years alongside his Dad.

In 2006, James accepted a position with Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) as the Southwest Victoria/South Australia District Manager, advising farmers on breeding and genetics. After 3 years in the role, James transferred to the UK where he continued to work for LIC as an Area Manager.

"My biggest experience and knowledge comes from working with farmers in the UK. I learnt a lot about pasture management and the fundamental things that made them money. I had a lot of knowledge to bring back home," he said.

After 3 years, James returned to Kyabram to manage the family farm for 12 months before entering into a Share Farming agreement with his parents; "We did it all through a consultant and had contracts drawn up," he said. "While I have residential property that I own, I don't own the cows. Mum and Dad own the herd, and as Share Farmer I share the costs and receive a percentage of the milk cheque."

Milking 370 cows on 108 hectares, James manages 2 employees and his parents help with calf rearing. He oversees the whole farm operation and has to make important decisions for both the short and long term viability of the business – a responsibility that he enjoys.

"Some decisions I still have to run by Dad because he's paying a percentage of the cost. We try to have a meeting every week to look at the budget, what's

coming up cost-wise and what our options are to purchase certain things."

To be a Share Farmer, James believes a person must have a love of cows and good communication and people management skills. An understanding of feed, nutrition, growing grass and pasture management is also important.

Outside of work, James is involved in the local industry. He is a member of Murray Dairy's Dairy Business Network and Accelerating Change projects. He has participated in the Young Rural Leader Program and is currently working to establish a local young farmer group.

In the short term, James' goal is to buy his parent's herd so he can progress to farm ownership; "I'm wanting to buy the whole herd and then hopefully I'll be in a position in 4-5 years to buy the farm as well," he said. "I have young stock and yearlings but I don't actually own any of the herd yet. So hopefully in a year's time, I can buy the herd from my parents, pay it off in 3 years and then buy the farm."

### James' Tips:

- If you have some money, buy calves because they grow in value.
- There are lots of traineeships and courses available for young farmers.
- Do your homework on the Farm Owner who you want to share farm with – make sure that they are people who are positive and progressive. They should want to make their farm more productive.
- Find out what the Farm Owner's aims are – ask about the likelihood of being able to buy their herd one day and about their timeframes.
- Talk to your bank and accountant – know what you can achieve and when.
- Surround yourself with good people and staff who are positive.
- Have a proper share farming agreement drawn up.





## Dennis Lomax

### Share Farmer, Mitta Valley

Dennis Lomax grew up helping out on his neighbour's dairy. Now a Share Farmer, Dennis has been farming full time for over 11 years, slowly progressing his career.

When Dennis was at school, he would travel to South Australia to work during the holidays. "I have a mate there who had a 2000 cow farm. I used to go there for holidays to work for 6 weeks, which was an experience," he said.

Dennis also started working on a dairy located at Mitta Valley, Northern Victoria, where he completed a 2 year school based apprenticeship and a Certificate III in Agriculture. After finishing school in Year 11, Dennis moved to a full time Farmhand position, working 5 days a week. He also started to build his off-farm assets and purchased his first house when he was 18 years old.

As Dennis' farm skills increased so did his responsibilities. While working as a Farmhand, he started to make more farm decisions and train new employees. After several years, Dennis progressed to the position of Farm Manager.

After 3 years, Dennis was ready to take the next step in his career. "I was looking to lease a farm somewhere so I asked the Farm Owner what he was going to do, and he said that he was looking to put on a Share Farmer."

Dennis jumped at the opportunity and has been Share Farming at the Mitta Valley dairy for 12 months, milking 400 cows on 450 acres. He owns 90 cows and engages a farm business consultant who advises on the share farming agreement as his herd increases.

As a Share Farmer, Dennis is responsible for overseeing the whole farm operation. He lives on the property and manages 2 full time and a part time employee. The Farm Owner also continues to work on the farm.

Dennis enjoys his job and he especially likes having control of the operation and making high level decisions. He admits that the role has some challenges such as managing financial and employee paperwork,

overseeing the farm through extreme weather conditions, and sharing expenses with the Farm Owner.

"To be a Share Farmer you have to be a good organiser and you always look forward to what employees are going to do and what jobs need to be done," he said.

Outside of work, Dennis has completed the Dairy Australia Feeding Pastures for Profit course, attends focus farm days, and is planning to visit Tasmania to learn about automated dairies. "For a young person learning, local groups are probably where you learn the most because you can learn from older farmers and they like giving advice," he said.

In the short term, Dennis aims to continue building his assets to help progress towards his long term goal of farm ownership. "I'm hoping to buy a farm in 5 years. I'd like to have all my own cows and machinery first. However, I could be happy still Share Farming here as well," he said.

#### Dennis' tips:

- You can't just say, 'I am going to be Share Farmer now' - you have to plan and build your assets.
- When you're young, you don't necessarily have to buy cows or motorbikes. I was not able to buy into cows, so I bought houses and off-farm investments instead.
- In a Share Farming arrangement, it's important to have good communication with the Farm Owner so both parties are always on the same page.



## Brodie Chester and Kevin Game Lessee, Bega

A shared passion for animals and love of the farming lifestyle attracted Brodie Chester and Kevin Game to the dairy industry. They met while working on a dairy farm and 7 years later, lease a farm together in Bega.

“Dairy farming is rewarding both on a personal and financial level. There are very few industries you can enter, grow your assets and skill base as quickly as dairy farming,” Brodie said.

When Kevin finished school, he completed a dairy apprenticeship and a Certificate IV in Dairy. Over 20 years Kevin has worked on several dairy farms, progressing from trainee, to farm management before becoming a lessee.

Brodie got her first taste of dairy farming through high school work experience. Before becoming a lessee, she worked at a few cattle studs and the livestock team at Landmark, Wagga Wagga.

In 2010 while working full time, Brodie and Kevin purchased 2 dairy cows and a single cow milker. “We milked the cows twice a day and used the milk to rear Holstein and XB bull calves. We found a market to sell the calves and purchased a further 3 cows to allow us to rear more calves,” Brodie said.

In 2012, Brodie and Kevin were offered a share farming position at Bega. They jumped at the opportunity and used funds from the calf sales to help purchase 100 cows.

“We had a short stint of share farming on our current farm before some unforeseen circumstances led us into our current lease agreement. Our arrangement was discussed with both parties – farm owner and lessee - and we ensured that the best interests of both parties were put in place,” Brodie said.

For over 2 years, Brodie and Kevin have been leasing the Bega property, milking 240 cows on 120 hectares. They work full time on-farm, managing a full time and a part time employee. As lessee, they are responsible for the daily operation of the whole farm business and work with a farm consultant who helps with the farm's

production. They believe maintaining and improving the farming landscape, while managing their resources sustainably, is an important aspect of their role.

To be a successful lessee, they believe a person must be hardworking, patient and passionate, “farming isn't something you can do easily unless you have passion. It's not a job, it's a lifestyle,” Brodie said.

Brodie and Kevin enjoy the opportunities that leasing provides, it allows them to have full control of the dairy operation, while providing them with time to pay off the herd.

“We have put our full time employee through a Certificate III in Dairy,” Brodie said. “As a young couple starting out - our heart and soul is in our business and it is really important for us to find employees that respect that.”

Off farm, the couple attend discussion groups held by Bega Cheese. Brodie is studying Agricultural Business Management at University and is the current Secretary of Dairy NSW Far South Coast Dairy Development Group. “These groups are vital. They not only get information out to farmers but also provide a social scene in which farmers can get off farm and interact,” she said.

The couple's future goal is to own their own farm, “ideally we will own our herd, producing high quality animals and milk - hopefully we're on our way to purchasing our own dairy farm.”

### Brodie and Kevin's tips:

- In a lessee arrangement, good communication is vital: without proper forms of communication, situations will be more stressful than they need to be.
- There is no such thing as luck: it comes down to preparation and opportunity. We were prepared to take an opportunity when it was presented to us.
- You can achieve anything but you need to get out there and do something about it: talk to farmers and get involved in groups and activities. The dairy industry is passionate about its young people, and most farmers are happy to support you along your journey.





## Share Farmer or Lessee

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations</li> <li>• <b>Pasture Production and Cropping</b> — determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers</li> <li>• <b>Plant Equipment and Infrastructure Maintenance</b> — maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas</li> <li>• <b>Administration</b> — manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management</li> <li>• Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent)</li> <li>• High level people management skills</li> <li>• High level Business Management skills</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</li> <li>• Take responsibility for farm performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business</li> <li>• Staff management and leadership</li> <li>• Communicate with farm workers and source goods &amp; services external to the business</li> <li>• Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting</li> <li>• High level of responsibility and decision making</li> <li>• Negotiation skills &amp; conflict management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share Farmers are regarded as 'Independent contractors'. They share the farm income</li> </ul>	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• <b>Industry Leadership programs</b></li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks – which run events for young dairy farmers</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<p>For Share Farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma of Agriculture</li> </ul>	<p><b>Share Farmer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33% Share – All mobile farm machinery</li> <li>• 50% Share – All mobile farm machinery and all stock</li> </ul> <p><b>Lessee:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lease property and own all mobile farm machinery and all stock</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessee</li> <li>• Farm Owner</li> </ul> <p><b>When Will I Be Ready?:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on the resources and equity you have built up</li> </ul>

The Share Dairy Farming in Australia – Model Code of Practice has guidelines and tools for assessing share farming arrangements and is available at [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/sharefarming](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/sharefarming)  
 More information on leasing is available at [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/leasing](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/leasing)

Share Farmer  
or  
Lessee

## Stuart Murray

### Farm Owner, Bamawm

Stuart Murray grew up on a dairy in Northern Victoria however, his parents were not dairy farmers themselves; “My parents farmed in this area - they were involved in mixed broad acre farming with Merino sheep, beef cattle and cereal. I grew up on a dairy farm but where we lived was not where my parents did their business. They invested in the property where we now farm and had a share farmer,” Stuart said.

After school, Stuart attended Agricultural College before returning to work with his parents as a broad acre farmhand. At 27 years old, Stuart and his wife Louise became partners with his parents by buying into the business.

Stuart found stepping up to farm ownership a natural progression and he increased his ownership of stock; “I was buying dairy cattle, as well as sheep, beef cattle and also purchasing machinery,” he said.

“My initial step into dairy farming came when my parents suggested they needed to sell the farm to fund their retirement; so I had to make a decision as to which direction I was going to go. Louise and I looked at the different industries we had been exposed to and decided dairy farming could afford us the lifestyle that we wanted to live.”

In 1990, Stuart purchased his parent's remaining share of the dairy. He continued to lease the farm for 3 years before purchasing his first 60 hectare dairy farm in 1993; “It was easy to transfer from sheep to dairy cattle, it was more of a transfer of assets. We started with 160 milking cows and associated young stock. It was challenging but the rewards were great, both financially and production wise.”

Over 20 years, the Murrys have grown the operation to milk 600 cows on 150 hectares, with a further 700 hectares of associated land. As farm owner, Stuart's role is focussed on ‘bigger picture’ business management while staying active on the farm. Stuart and Louise work full time alongside a mechanic, 3 farmhands and a share farmer who has lived and worked on the farm for 2 years. While the share farmer is responsible for livestock management, Stuart manages agronomy and feed.

“I love it. I enjoy the business side as much as I do the stock work,” Stuart said. “We identified a need to have somebody other than myself and Louise who is responsible. The share farming model suited us better than a herd management model where we employ someone on a salary. I'm passionate about the viability of the dairy industry – we have to provide a pathway for our future dairy farmers to become farm owners.”

Stuart admits maintaining the right balance between growing assets and investing in production is a key challenge. Over the years, the Murrys have completed a range of industry courses and employ an agronomist, nutritionist, business manager and financial consultant who provide expert advice.

“There are multiple facets to running this business - there's employer/employee relationships, human resources, natural resources, livestock, taxation, investment and nutritional issues. Plus there's the day to day training in regard to occupational health and safety for you and your staff,” Stuart said.

The Murray's future aim is to build their business assets. Stuart is currently working to establish a local Young Dairy Network to support, encourage and educate young dairy farmers in the region; “the future of the industry is very promising so it's important that we have these networks,” he said.

“I would like to remain an investor in the industry and a promoter of the industry. The dairy industry has a lot of potential and it needs people to sell that potential.”

#### Stuart's tips:

- Start small and grow: don't expect to have all the skills you need before you start - skills are gained by making mistakes, farming in different environments and with different limitations
- The key to a successful share farmer/farm owner relationship - good communication, having defined goals and sharing in the profits
- Build your people skills: as we have expanded, human resource management has become an important skill to have



## Farm Owner

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Rewards	Regional Support Programs	Training Options	Resources Needed	Next Career Step
<p>Tasks will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Milk Harvesting</b> — Train others in correct milk harvesting techniques</li> <li>• <b>Animal Husbandry</b> — organise the mating program and AI livestock, oversee the animal health program including the training and supervision of staff</li> <li>• <b>Feed Management and Delivery</b> — manage stored feed inventory, understand dietary requirements based on production, cost and availability, balance rations</li> <li>• <b>Pasture Production and Cropping</b> — determine the paddocks to lock up for fodder conservation and the most appropriate time to harvest, organise for purchase, delivery and application of fertilisers</li> <li>• <b>Plant Equipment and Infrastructure Maintenance</b> — maintain and develop stock handling equipment, shedding and feeding areas</li> <li>• <b>Administration</b> — manage accounts and tax requirements, set financial indicators and manage the farm budget, oversee the appointment of new employees, their induction, training, remuneration and performance appraisal, organise the communication system including staff meetings and whiteboards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of dairy farm systems, including people management</li> <li>• Minimum of a Diploma of Agriculture (or equivalent)</li> <li>• High level people management skills</li> <li>• High level Business Management skills</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to be able to analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</li> <li>• Take responsibility for farm performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to establish goals and strategic direction for the farm business</li> <li>• Staff management and leadership</li> <li>• Communicate with farm workers and source goods &amp; services external to the business</li> <li>• Business planning, manage farm cash flow and financial reporting</li> <li>• High level of responsibility and decision making</li> <li>• Negotiation skills &amp; conflict management</li> </ul>	<p>Depends on farm size and productivity</p>	<p>Every Dairy Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Regional Development Program (RDP) which supports the dairy community</li> <li>• <b>Industry Leadership programs</b></li> <li>• Young Dairy Networks —which run events for your young staff</li> <li>• Community programs, footy and netball clubs etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma of Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Farm</li> <li>• Milking Shed and all equipment needed to run the farm system</li> <li>• Livestock</li> </ul>	<p><b>Roles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase your involvement in Dairy Industry; e.g. RDP Board, Dairy Farmer organisation and other industry boards, Leadership programs.</li> </ul>

**Note:** If you are Farm Owner looking at moving out of active dairy farming read more at [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingback](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/steppingback)

Stepping Stones 2016

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# Planning Your Dairy Career – Example

### Career Vision:

Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?

50% Share Farmer

How long will it take me to get there?

10 Years

### Where Am I Now?

What is your Current Role?

Assistant Farmhand

How long have you been doing the role?

1 year

What level of training have you achieved to date?

Certificate II including 'Cups On Cups Off'

When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career?  
(use the Stepping Stone tables as a guide)

I am ready to take the next step to the Farmhand level

### Short Term Planning

What is your Next Role?

Farm Hand

Senior Farm Hand

Farm Production Manager

Farm Business Manager

Share Farmer

What training and experience do you need?

I need to get to Cert III Ag

What level of finances and/or farm equipment do I need to acquire?

Aim to have \$2000 saved by the end of the year

Action	When
Discuss my advancement with the Farm Owner	Next week
Enrol in Cert III Ag	2 weeks
Start saving	Now

### Longer Term Planning – Resources and Money

If your plan includes Share Farming then you need to start building resources (e.g. equipment) and your bank balance.

Fill out the table to get an idea of the money involved in getting ready for share farming

The Stepping Stones program will provide a way to get financial and business management advice

Resource	Cost	When
Side by side	\$10,000	Next year
Tractor	\$80,000	2 years
Other farm equipment	\$100,000	5 years
Cows. e.g. 350 cows and young stock	\$450,000	10 years

### Longer Term Planning – Training and Experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision

Cert III Ag

Cert IV Ag

Diploma Ag

Advanced Diploma Ag

AQF Quals

How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

6 Years

What contacts do you need to make to allow you to work in the various farm roles along the way to your career vision?

RDP events – Young Dairy Network

Action	When
Join the VDN	3 weeks
Look up the RDP website and find out the upcoming events	1 week
Sit down with my current boss and seek his/her advice on next steps	Next week







# Planning Your Dairy Career

You can download this document at: [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/overview.htm](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/stepping-stones/overview.htm)

Career Vision:

Where do I want to get to with my Dairy Career?

How long will it take me to get there?

Where Am I Now?

What is your Current Role?

How long have you been doing the role?

What level of training have you achieved to date?

When will you be ready for the next step in your Dairy Career?

(use the Stepping Stone tables as a guide)

Short Term Planning

What is your Next Role?

Farm Hand

Senior Farm Hand

Farm Production Manager

Farm Business Manager

Share Farmer

What training and experience do you need?

What level of finances and/or farm equipment do I need to acquire?

Action	When

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Longer Term Planning – Training and Experience

What AQF level do you need to achieve to enable your Career Vision

Cert III Ag

Cert IV Ag

Diploma Ag

Advanced Diploma Ag

AQF Quals

How many years will it take to get the AQF level you need?

What contacts do you need to make to allow you to work in the various farm roles along the way to your career vision?

Action	When



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