



Dairy
Australia
Your Levy at Work



Stepping Stones

Career pathways in the Western Australian 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 Wesley Lammie. After playing in the WA Football League for 7 years, Wesley returned to his family roots of dairy farming. With his family's support, Wesley has leased a farm at Boyanup, milking 360 cows on 330 acres. He enjoys leasing as it has allowed him to progressively build the business over 2 years. Wesley plans to continue growing his asset base and has taken on a bigger lease in Busselton, which will see him move to nearly a 700 acre platform.

Or you can learn about Shannon Jobe, a passionate young farmer who works as an Assistant Farmhand on a 900 acre, 550 herd farm at Busselton. She has built her skills by completing industry training including the Certificate III in Agriculture, Cups On Cups Off (COCO), Artificial Insemination (AI) and chemical certification. Shannon loves the dairy industry – she is planning to complete the Certificate IV in Agriculture this year and her long term goal is to operate her own farm.

Stepping Stones can be downloaded from:
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 160 dairy farms in WA produce around 0.35 billion litres of milk a year, which equates to 3.6% 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 Western 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

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Western Dairy

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**Western Australia 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; 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 Western Dairy programs
- Learn about dairy industry scholarships

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

Contacts for further information

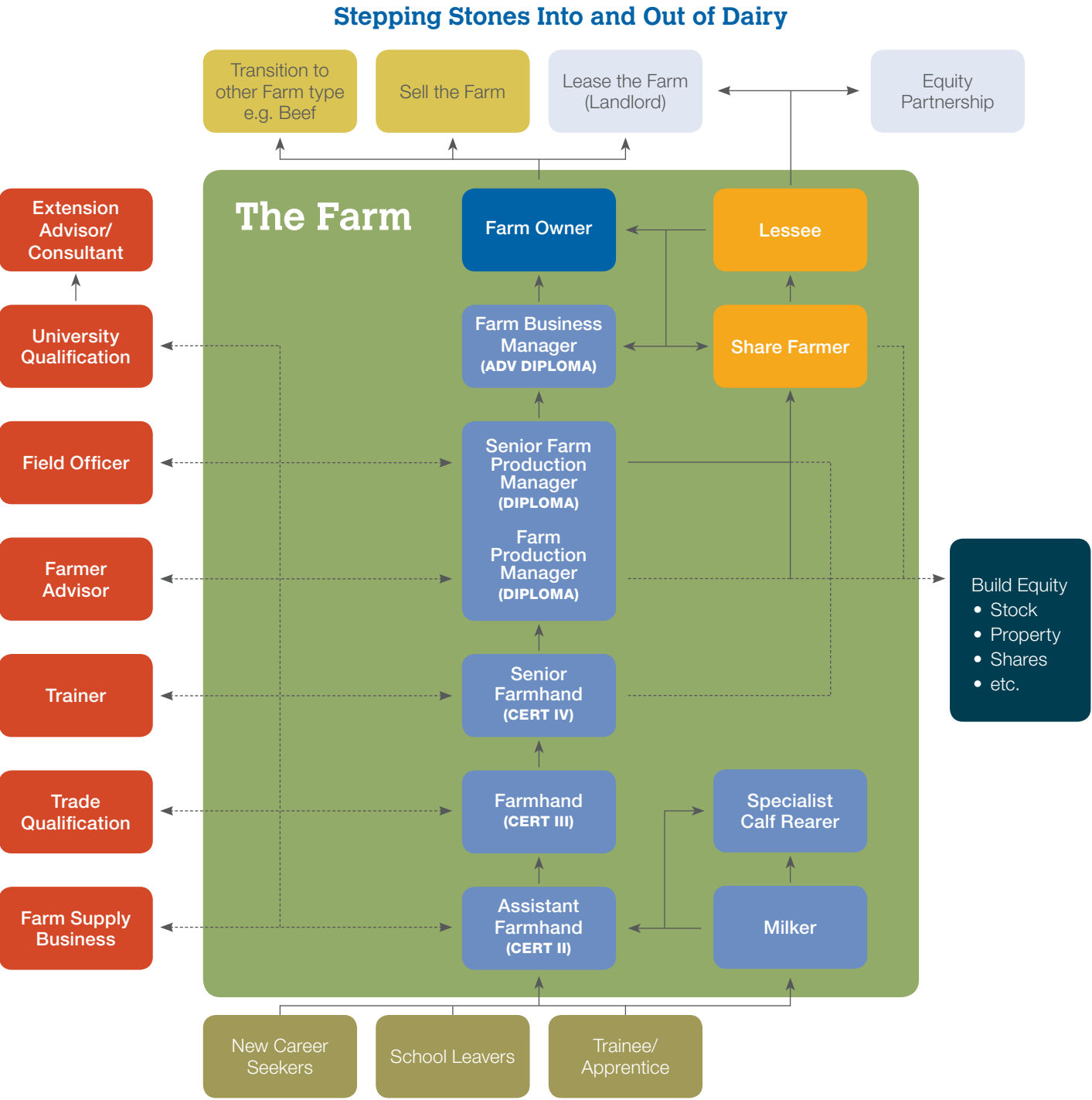
Dairy Australia
www.dairyaustralia.com.au

Western Dairy
www.westerndairy.com.au



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.





Alexz Crawford Milker/Apprentice, Brundee

Alexz Crawford grew up on a family dairy farm at Brundee, just outside of Nowra; “When I was young I’d wake up early on weekends to work with my Pa and Uncle,” he said. “I love the dairy industry. It’s in my blood – I love the cows and I’m a real animal person.”

During high school, Alexz took up the opportunity to work with his neighbours, Tom and Kyleigh Cochrane, who own a 400 cow, 360 acre dairy. “As Dad and I were going into town one day, we drove past Tom who was doing silage. Tom yelled out if I wanted to give him a hand and I got a job that afternoon.”

Alexz has been working on the Cochrane family farm for 5 years. Initially, he worked weekends and during school holidays before becoming a full time apprentice when he finished Year 12.

Rather than celebrating ‘schoolies’ week, Alexz purchased his first cow, a Brown Swiss Heifer. This decision paid off as he returned from the 2015 Sydney Royal Easter Show with the Brown Swiss Junior Champion title.

Alexz enjoys his job because every day is different. He believes to work on a farm, a person must have good communication skills, be reliable, responsible and open to learning. Alexz has a good working relationship with the Farm Owners and their 3 employees, whom he continues to learn from.

“Tom’s been really supportive; everything I want to learn, he is more than willing to teach me. I just try to soak it all in,” Alexz said. “I’m lucky I have good bosses that have been supportive and have really tried to help me get into the dairy industry.”

“If I work in the morning, I get up at 4.30am to milk and I’m finished by around 8am. I go home for breakfast and back to the farm at 9am to do jobs. If I milk in the afternoon, I start at 2pm and finish around 6pm. Sometimes I wonder why I’m getting out of bed at 4am – I do it because I love it and I can’t see myself doing anything else.”

In the second year of his apprenticeship, Alexz has completed a Certificate III of Dairy Production and recently commenced a Certificate IV and Diploma of Agriculture through Tocal.

“I study in a one week block, once every 6 weeks at college. It’s both practical and theoretical – you’re always learning and picking up new things.”

Outside of work, Alexz attends industry short courses with the support of Tom and Kyleigh. “If there are courses on, it’s good to go and learn. I wanted to do an Artificial Insemination (AI) course and Tom paid half of the course fee. I’ve done a hoof care course and there is an opportunity to do a pregnancy testing course which I’ll do.”

In the short term, Alexz is looking forward to completing his study and travelling to America next year for a holiday; while his long term aim is to operate his own farm.

“I really love the breeding side of dairy. I have 4 cows, so I’m slowly starting,” he said. “I’d like to be a farm manager and eventually move into farm ownership one day, if the opportunity comes up.”

Alexz’s tips:

- Be confident in yourself and in handling big animals
- You can’t choose your jobs each day; be willing to complete a range of tasks
- Talk to your boss and employees – be open to learn from others
- Every farm is different. Be open-minded and adaptable, different methods work for different farms
- Sometimes things go wrong, but you have to deal with it and move forward
- You need people skills and have to get along with other employees in the team
- You can’t buy a farm straight away; you have to earn your stripes and work your way up. Then when you’re ready, if an opportunity comes up to progress, you have to jump on it.



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

*Check the latest pay rates at www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates

Kylie Quilty, Calf Rearer Boyanup

Kylie Quilty admits that initially she did not know a lot about cows; "I was country born but I didn't know much about cows until I met my first husband and I learnt the basics of beef cattle."

While beef farming, Kylie had Jersey cows that she milked to raise calves - she saw an opportunity to build cow numbers and enter the dairy industry, "I jumped in feet first and started milking and building my numbers. I then started supplying Challenge Dairy in Capel, instead of just raising cows," she said.

Kylie found moving into dairy farming an easy transition and was offered a milking position on a local dairy farm.

While working, Kylie leased her herd to Boyanup dairy Farm Owner, Victor Rodwell. After 4 years of milking, Victor offered her a Calf Rearing position on his dairy farm that milks 800 cows on 240 hectares.

Kylie accepted the part time role and quickly progressed to full time work; "During our peak period, we calve between 300-400 calves so it's quite intensive. We can have up to 20 calves born a day. I usually have some backpackers who I work alongside in the shed," she said.

"We have 2 big calving seasons a year. During calving season, the first thing I do each day is check all the springers. I process any calves that are born - which means tagging them, giving their mum identification and entering them in the computer system. Then I tube the calves, colostrum, and whatever that needs to be done. I then get them into the shed, collect the milk from the dairy and feed all the babies."

Kylie loves being able to work with calves everyday. She appreciates that the role has some challenges, such as maintaining calf health. Kylie can sometimes work long days that are physically challenging but appreciates it's the nature of the job.

To be a Calf Rearer, Kylie believes a person must have a love of animals and lots of patience; "You've got to be pedantic, pay attention and have an eye for detail. The little things are really important - a calf can get sick quickly so you need to know visual signs like if a calf's ears are down or if their nose is runny. I have protocols in place so there are certain procedures that have to be followed for every calf."

Kylie is always learning on the job, she learns from employees, the local vet and Farm Owner Victor; "the vet we use is fantastic. If I have anything that I'm a little concerned about, I just give him a call and he gives me a hand," she said.

Kylie aims to keep growing in her role. She has progressively been given more responsibility and now helps with the operation's administration, paper work and stock management. "When I first started, calves were my day to day role but I now have more responsibilities. Once the cattle are weaned, I manage them up to the mating stage and then the Herd Manager takes over," she said. "I am really happy where I am. I love my cows and I love what I do with a passion."

Kylie's tips:

- Don't start with false illusions: get farm experience - do part time, weekend or holiday work. If you get a foot in the door and impress someone, they'll call you with work
- Learn about animal health and stock management: it's important to learn how to safely handle big animals
- Be willing and keen to learn
- A love and passion for animals is crucial



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

*Check the latest pay rates at www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/payrates

Shannon Jobe Assistant Farmhand, Busselton

Shannon Jobe has been dairy farming for 5 years. From New Zealand, Shannon was born into agriculture with her great grandfather, grandfather and mother all being dairy farmers.

From a young age Shannon helped on the family farm, slowly progressing her role as her skills increased. Shannon moved to Northern Victoria and started droving and relief milking after school. At 17 years old, she started full time work and since January 2015, Shannon has worked as an Assistant Farmhand on a 900 acre, 550 herd dairy farm located at Busselton.

“I enjoy working with the cows and watching the calves grow into the herd. I love being outside, dairy farming isn’t a job – it’s a lifestyle” she said.

In her role, Shannon works alongside 4 other employees. She is required to complete a range of seasonal tasks to ensure the farm is run smoothly, such as calf rearing, milking, pre-calving feed, checking and assisting calving cows, moving dry stock, treating and recording sick or injured cows, and artificial insemination.

Shannon loves her job; she believes to be an Assistant Farmhand you must be open to new ideas and experiences. “You need patience, persistence, a love and passion for farming, animals and be able to work in a team and independently,” she said.

Shannon also appreciates that working with livestock can sometimes be unpredictable and a key challenge of her role is to monitor and maintain herd health.

Outside of work, Shannon is involved in Western Dairy’s Young Dairy Network, a group of local young dairy farmers who meet, socialise and discuss farm issues. She has completed industry training, including a Certificate III in Agriculture, Cups On Cups Off (COCO), Artificial Insemination (AI) and chemical certification; “I’m planning to start a Certificate IV in Agriculture this year,” she said.

Shannon’s short term goal is to keep learning and growing her hands-on skills though education and training, in an aim to reach her future goal of farm ownership. “In 5 years, I want to own and run my own farm or be on the right track towards achieving my goal.”

Shannon’s tips:

- Be passionate about farming
- Expect the unexpected; it’s not a ‘9 to 5’ job
- If dairy farming is your path be open to new ideas, experiences, advice and knock backs



Assistant Farmhand

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

Lee Greenwood Waroona, Farmhand

Lee Greenwood has been dairy farming for almost 3 years. Originally from Victoria, Lee worked as a concreter for 16 years and in WA's mining industry.

While in WA, Lee was introduced to dairy farming through a friend. He helped to milk an 80 cow herd and was instantly attracted to the farming lifestyle.

After a couple of years, Lee saw a Farmhand position advertised for Vicki and Luke Fitzpatrick's dairy in Waroona. The dairy milks 180 cows on 500 acres - Lee jumped at the job offer and has not looked back since.

"I've been working for Vicki and Luke for 7 months now," Lee said. "When I came to the farm I only knew a little bit about dairy. I've learnt a lot, including understanding Vicki and Luke's way of farming."

As a Farmhand, Lee is responsible for completing a wide variety of seasonal tasks such as working with livestock, pastures, fences and feeding. He works alongside Luke, whom he continues to learn from.

"I like the lifestyle and freedom of dairy farming, but there's still a lot of responsibility on a farm. The cows can be cheeky - they have a good character and I really like working with them," he said.

"I know what tasks I have to complete so there's a good satisfaction in my job. The farm was classed in the top 100 for lowest bulk milk cell count (BMCC) dairies in Australia - we have really good goals and Vicki and Luke continue to train me really well."

Lee also appreciates that his role has challenges such as monitoring and managing calf and herd health. He believes to be a Farmhand a person must be reliable, hands on and confident to work solo.

While working full time, Lee is also completing a Certificate III in Agriculture (Dairy Production). "I've ticked off quite a few modules and I have also done the Cups On Cups Off (COCO) course."

"I come from a concreting background so when I started the course I knew nothing - I'm learning everything through doing the Certificate. Vicki and Luke have been great teachers - they let me know what's happening on the farm and they discuss everything with me. I couldn't learn from anyone better."

In the short term, Lee plans to continue learning so he can one day reach his ultimate aim of herd or farm ownership.

"Eventually, I want to have my own herd because dairy offers a lifestyle that I enjoy. Herd or farm ownership is a future goal," Lee said, "I feel that I need at least 3-4 years with Vicki and Luke before I can look at starting a herd. There's a lot of work involved but the outcome and what you can accomplish on a farm is a good reward."

Lee's Tips:

- Choose a good place of employment. All farms are run differently - finding a good employer is key
- Have a good working relationship and open communication with the farm employer
- Dairy farming teaches you a number of different skills that you can use into the future
- As a dairy farm employee, being highly reliable is important



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

Bradley Fairbrass Senior Farmhand, Bussleton

Growing up, Brad Fairbrass would stay at his grandparent's dairy farm during the school holidays, "I'd follow granddad around the farm, but I never really had the idea of farming as a career choice," he said.

His grandparents on both sides were dairy farmers and his parents worked in the wine industry at Margaret River. Brad planned to study sports science at University, however after completing a gap year, he decided to work and spent 18 months on a beef feed lot near Geraldton.

Brad got homesick, moved back to Brusselton and needed a job. "I was talking to people around town and eventually I got a job with the Pooles. They live not too far from where my grandparents farmed," he said.

He was offered a Farmhand position on Ruth and Rob Poole's dairy "I was lucky that I found good people to work for and my passion grew from there. I love it - I've never thought about leaving."

Brad has been working on the family run farm for almost 6 years. The property milks 450 cows on 800 acres. In early 2014, Rob and Ruth leased the farm to their daughter and son-in-law, Claire and Andrew Jenkins.

Over the years, Brad has gained on the job training by working alongside Rob and Andrew; and as his skills increased, so did his responsibilities. "I used to be given paddocks to seed or spray and I would just follow orders. Now, I work more in consultation with Andrew. He lists the paddocks that I'm going to do and together we work out fertiliser or I give my input into what I think needs to be done" he said.

As a Senior Farmhand, Brad's day involves waking up early to milk. He then completes a variety of seasonal jobs including silage and pasture work - seeding, spraying and fertilising - as well as feeding, fencing and general farm maintenance. Occasionally he will milk again in the afternoon.

"There's lots of learning - it's fairly challenging and it's pretty rewarding," he said. "Initially going from sports science to dairy, I was as a bit worried I wouldn't be

challenged but I really enjoy it and it's rewarding to see your output. At the end of the year, you can work out how many litres of milk you have produced per cow or per hectare - it's really good."

While working full time and with the Pooles support, Brad completed the Certificate III in Agriculture. Brad was keen to take his education one step further, and with Claire and Andrew's encouragement, he recently completed a Certificate IV of Agriculture. "When Andrew and Claire took over, the Certificate IV was one of the things I said I wanted to do in the next 2 years, and they were really supportive of it," he said.

Brad has also completed pasture courses, Cups On Cups Off (COCO) and Artificial Insemination (AI) training through Western Dairy. Outside of work, Brad attends Western Dairy workshops, discussion days and is a member of the Young Dairy Network Australia (YDNA) WA Reference Group. "The group meets every couple of months and we discuss events and sponsorship," he said. "Discussion groups are also a great way to meet people. It gets you off the farm and you can socialise, network and find a work/life balance."

Brad's long term aim is to gradually work towards investing in his own dairy farm. To reach this goal, Andrew helps him with advice and information on progression. "It's my best bet to network, work hard, and build up some capital to get leverage. Hopefully by my mid-thirties I can be linked to a milk cheque somewhere."

Brad's tips:

- Western Dairy is a good port of call for information. They are happy to help people who are starting out or who want to know more about the dairy industry
- Get as much on the job training as possible and complete trainee courses: the dairy industry has a number of courses and events. Industry leaders can also help by supporting you with your career
- Discussion groups are a great way to meet people off farm



Senior Farmhand

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

Nick Henderson Farm Production Manager, Harvey

Nick Henderson is Second in Charge of a 320 cow dairy farm in Harvey. He grew up on a 250 cow dairy in NZ. During his senior years of school, Nick relief milked for local farmers and moved into a full time Farmhand position on a 800 cow dairy when he finished year 12.

After 18 months, Nick got his truck license and drove livestock for a local transport company; "When I was 19, I shifted to WA to drive road trains for 3 years," Nick said. "I then went to the mines exploration drilling for 18 months but decided it wasn't for me."

Nick had always wanted to work on a cattle station so traveled north, working 2 seasons mustering and transporting cattle to Broome. "I was 24 and the station manager was 32. I was amazed how someone that young could professionally manage such a huge operation! This encouraged me to take a similar pathway and dairy farming became very appealing again," Nick said.

With a new mindset and motivation, Nick moved south to Harvey. Through word of mouth, he contacted farm owners Dale and Leanne Hanks who operate a 320 cow dairy.

Nick has been working with the Hanks for 6 months and highly values their working relationship; "Having a mindset of wanting to learn and a boss who wants to teach, works hand in hand. A career in the dairy industry is a fantastic thought," Nick said.

Each day is different on the farm. Nick wakes up early to milk the cows with another full time employee. He then completes a range of seasonal tasks; "Depending on the time of season, I could be spreading fertilizer and dealing with pasture management, carting livestock with the farm truck, artificially inseminating cows or dealing with young stock."

Nick believes to be Second in Charge, a person must be reliable, passionate, and willing to listen and learn. Nick is always learning on the job and enjoys the new responsibilities of his role. He especially likes planning daily tasks and being able to work outdoors with healthy cows.

Nick admits there are also some challenges. "The biggest challenge is adapting quickly to a very different dairy operation to what I am use to," he said. "NZ and WA are almost complete opposites -there's seasonal calving in NZ and twice yearly in WA. I really enjoy a challenge and learning different systems."

Outside of work, Nick has completed a Certificate of Artificial Insemination and is a Western Dairy Young Dairy Network (YDN) committee member. He is also involved in Rumen8, a cow nutrition group workshop that deals with seasonal changes in WA and transition feeding for cows.

"Training and industry courses are important - I definitely take opportunities when they come along," he said.

Nick's long term aim is to gain some equity; "In 5 years, I see myself firmly in the dairy industry and hoping to gain some equity to achieve my future goals," he said. "Everyone needs an ambitious goal - farm ownership would be the ultimate. I am a realist and like to set achievable goals as building blocks - one foot in front of the other."

Nick's tips:

- Be friendly and have a good sense of humour
- Be willing to listen, learn and think outside the box
- Step outside your comfort zone to find your true potential
- Be reliable and passionate about your role
- Ask questions and take an interest in every task on the farm - showing a genuine interest opens doors



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

Tavis Hall Assistant Farm Manager, Wokulup

Tavis Hall is a fifth generation dairy farmer. He's Assistant Manager of a family dairy located at Wokulup. "I have always helped my grandfather and parents on our family dairy farm - from driving tractors, helping dad in the dairy and milking cows," Tavis said.

When he finished school, Tavis studied to be a diesel mechanic and worked in the industry for 2 years; "I got sick of it - at the time my brother was studying at the local Agricultural College and the trainee at the College left and he jokingly said, "why don't you take that job?" I started 2 weeks later and came out with a Certificate III in Agriculture," he said.

After completing the 12 month traineeship, Tavis worked on different dairy farms in the region. Over 2 years he worked as a Farmhand doing milking, herd management and breeding, before returning to the family farm.

"My brother was working on the farm with my parents - there wasn't enough room for me as well, so I found a job with 3 different dairy farms. Then my brother decided to pursue dairy farming in another state, so I came home and took on his role," he said.

Tavis has been back on the farm for 3 years. He initially worked as a Farmhand before gradually progressing to be Assistant Manager. As his skills increase, Tavis is given more responsibility - when his father is away he manages the 160 cow, 280 acre property.

"I'm learning what makes our farm run; whether it's tractors, cows, dairy, fencing or equipment. Then there's staff management and pastures - it's about learning every section and being able to take the pressure off my father having to run it all," he said.

Tavis believes a person must have a love of animals, passion for farming, good time management skills and lots of patience to be a good manager.

In his role, Tavis ensures the farm is run smoothly and

oversees 3 casual employees. He starts at 3am when he milks, feeds the cows and calves. From 8.30am to 1pm, he completes a variety of farm duties including stock movements. He oversees the afternoon milking and manages the calves, before retuning home at 6pm to his family.

"I don't take my job for granted - I work hard to make sure I am an asset to the farm and to the business," he said. "Although it can be challenging, it's also rewarding working with my family."

Tavis has completed a First Aid course, Artificial Insemination (AI) course and has chemical certification. He enjoys showing cows and is a member of the Holstein Breeder's Association. He is also involved in Western Dairy's Young Dairy Network (YDN) and farm discussion days, "YDN has been key in helping me progress. As I work for my family, it's good to have other people supporting me and I give back to them as well," he said.

In the short term, Tavis aims to expand the operation while he continues to learn. He wants to be fully equipped to run the business when his parents retire, and in the next few years he will learn the financial side of the business. Tavis is considering doing a farm management course and is enthusiastic about future farming technologies and robotics.

Tavis' Tips:

- If you want to get into dairy, visit a farm and learn how to milk - it's the basis of all dairy jobs and you can see if you like it
- Show people how passionate you are - it opens doors
- Keep your eyes open, read industry magazines and research: learn about cows, whether it's breeding, feeding or new technology
- Network and build a group of friends: I have a list of people - not just for helping out on the farm - but also if I've had a hard day we can catch up, talk and relax



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

Scott Hamilton, Share Farmer, Busselton

Scott Hamilton operates a 240 cow, 210 hectare dairy located at Busselton. "My passion has always been animals," he said, "I really enjoy owning a successful business that is involved with animals."

Originally from NZ, Scott grew up working on sheep farms. He studied Agricultural Science at University, with a 3 month practical component working on a dairy farm. After University, Scott worked with NZ Forestry before moving into a full time dairy position.

After 2 years of contract milking, Scott moved to Perth and met his wife, Sharon. "After several years, Sharon and I decided to move to NZ. We then moved back to WA and lived in the Wheat Belt briefly before being offered a position on a South West dairy farm."

Scott initially managed the farm and his role quickly progressed - he did not own any cows but had a share of the operation's cost and income. After 6 years, the Farm Owner's sons returned to the property to work so Scott and Sharon progressed to a 50/50 sharemilking position at Busselton.

The Hamilton family have lived and share farmed on the Busselton property for 12 years. "Our assets slowly built up - we were saving and putting money aside to buy cows so it was a fairly easy progression," he said.

As a Share Farmer, Scott is responsible for the day to day management of the farm including managing and training part time staff. "You have to think in terms of running a business and utilise available resources - grass, grain and staff - to produce milk profitably," he said. "Most of the job is planning and organising herd management - but 80% of the day to day work is still related to milking, calving, and feeding the cows and calves. Sharon has an understanding of how the farm works and does all the administrative duties."

Scott appreciates that Share Farming has some challenges such as managing past low milk prices against cash flow, asset objectives between the Farm Owner and Share Farmer and finding experienced

employees; "you're business is 365 days a year so the challenge of taking time off is real. It's tempting to think that nobody can look after the cows quite like you. You need to have delegation skills so you don't burn out."

Outside of work, Scott has completed postgraduate environmental science study and is an active member of the local dairy industry. He is enthusiastic about promoting the dairy industry through education and is involved in Dairy Australia's Cows Create Careers project.

"I try to promote dairy as a career option and I'm on a few panels for animal welfare and education. Western Dairy is very prominent and active - there's always interesting and valuable courses and events each year."

"At this stage of our career, we're quite happy as long as the business is successful and profitable. We have clear guidelines of what is a sustainable business and we need to look at an exit plan for the future. At some stage, every farmer needs a plan for when, and under what circumstances to exit - I can still be involved in the industry, my role just may change."

Scott's Tips:

- You must enjoy working by yourself; even if you work in a big operation you still have to be able to work solo
- Embrace responsibility and risk if you want to successfully transition from an employee to being self-employed
- To enjoy dairy farming you must have an interest in cows. Caring for large animals from a health, welfare and safety point of view is paramount
- Build a good track record of planning and implementing jobs. You also need patience, good observation skills and a strategy to manage stress
- Women and men are suited to working on a dairy farm - both can do the same job and bring different strengths and skills to the role



Lachlan Fry, Leesees Brunswick Junction

Lachlan Fry was raised on a 400 cow dairy located at Benger. In 2006, his parents sold the family farm and leased a dairy at Brunswick Junction, milking 130 cows across 470 acres.

"We took on the lease in the year that I finished high school," he said. "I worked for 12 months as a Farmhand and my parents oversaw the farm."

While working, Lachlan completed a Certificate III of Agriculture and attended University part time to study a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce, majoring in management. In 2011, Lachlan was a recipient of the Semex-Holstein Australia Youth Fellowship Award, spending 6 months in Canada visiting host farms and working at different dairies.

"When I returned from Canada, I went back to University full time to finish my degree. I then started an 18 month livestock traineeship at Landmark," he said. "In 2014, I came back to the family farm full time. I picked up my role again and also started to take on some of the financial management side of the business."

Lachlan is employed under his parent's business, Katandra Farming. He is responsible for milk harvesting, reproduction management, pasture management, herd health, young stock and general farm duties. His younger brother, Corbin is also involved and his roles include growing fodder, machinery duties, construction and maintenance.

Lachlan loves his job. He appreciates working in changing environmental conditions can sometimes be challenging. "I enjoy working with cows - it's my passion, so that's a big driver and motivator for me. I enjoy the flexibility and the lifestyle that dairy farming offers, it's very rewarding and enjoyable," he said.

Lachlan's parents no longer work full time on the farm but they continue to oversee the farm's operation. "My parents are also partners in a real estate business. Over the last 6 months, they have been transitioning and moving the financial and management side of the farm over to me," he said.

"I'm still employed by them - we're going through a transition stage so I can learn the ropes. I'm beginning to take on a more active financial management role in the business, which includes budgeting, cost management and future planning assisted by the support of my parents."

Outside of work, Lachlan is involved in the local industry and is Chairman of the WA Youth Cattle Handlers Camp "Dairy has given me a lot of opportunity in terms of the networks and contacts that I've made," he said.

Lachlan is looking forward to building his career in the dairy industry and is open to new opportunities. "My younger brother will have more of a role on the farm next year - we are working through whether our farm's big enough to accommodate both of us. We have a really good relationship with the farm owners, so if we leased it for another 10 years it could work for all of us - and we may have an option to purchase half the farm in the future."

Lachlan's tips:

- Get out there! Attend industry field days or ask a farmer if you can do some relief milking. If a person's keen to have a go, a farmer is usually willing to give them a go
- Get involved in local industry groups – a great start to learn about the industry and meet people



Wesley Lammie Lessee, Boyanup

Wesley Lammie believes passion, hard work and business nous are key to a successful career in the dairy industry. His grandfather farmed in Scotland and when he immigrated to Australia, operated a dairy with Wesley's father, Robin.

"As a kid I thrived with the opportunities you get on a farm," Wesley said. "It's an environment and lifestyle you don't get when you're in a city."

When he was young, Wesley's family sold the dairy to operate a transport company. Still with an interest in the industry, Wesley helped on his aunty and uncle's dairy during school holidays, completed Years 11 and 12 at the Harvey College of Agriculture.

After College, Wesley followed his other passion – football. He moved to Perth to play in the WA Football League while working at his family's transport company as a General Manager. After 7 years, Wesley was keen to get back into farming.

"We knew owners of a beef farm and they offered us the farm to lease," Wesley said. "I was in Perth so Dad took on the lease. 12 months later, Dad sold the transport business and I decided I didn't want to continue in Perth."

Wesley initially considered hay and silage contracting, along with beef farming. He also considered buying a dairy - but the price of land was too costly.

"Dad and I were sitting in the old unused dairy on the beef farm, and we jokingly said that it wouldn't take much to get the dairy running again. 4 months later, we milked our first cows," he said. "I had support from my family to buy cows and set up the dairy; the shed was completely gutted and we put in the milking plant. We purchased 80 cows and have progressed from there."

Wesley has leased the Boyanup property for 2 years, milking 360 cows on 330 acres. During the start-up phase, Wesley partnered with a processing company that offered a minimum milk-price guarantee – a decision he believes was vital to the operation's success.

As a Lessee, Wesley is responsible for the daily operation of the whole farm business and manages two part time employees; "I love it! I'm a work orientated person - the transition into dairy was fairly easy. I just had to establish a routine and dairy provides a structure that I enjoy."

Wesley also works alongside his brother Connor, who as a qualified tractor mechanic, helps with farm mechanics, hay, silage and milking.

"Having the right people around you is important; I'm fortunate to have a father who is very switched on in making business decisions. My partner gives me 150% support and the success of my business is driven by the endless support of my family."

Wesley enjoys leasing because it has allowed him to progressively build the business and he plans to continue growing his asset base. "A lease is an annual fixed cost and it's less than paying interest on land; leasing allows me to decrease debt quickly because I don't have a massive land debt. For a young person with a young business, I have a healthy cash flow and it allows me to take opportunities whether it's with cattle, machinery, or outside investments," Wesley said.

"And we're still growing - we've just taken on a bigger lease in Busselton so we're moving from a 330 to nearly a 700 acre platform. This summer, we're going to milk 500 cows in lieu of going to the new farm in April next year."

Wesley's tips:

- You get out what you put in
- Passion is important, but you also have to make good business decisions
- There's industry support available to help you reach your goals
- Have the right people around you; some of the best advice comes from other farmers
- In a leasing arrangement, a positive, transparent and open relationship with the farm owner is vital



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

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 More information on leasing is available at www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/leasing

Share Farmer
or
Lessee

Michael Giumelli Farm Owner, Harvey

Michael Giumelli is a fourth generation dairy farmer from Harvey. He started in the industry at a young age, helping his father on weekends and during school holidays.

After finishing school, Michael worked at a few local dairies where he completed a 12 month dairy apprenticeship and a Certificate III in Agriculture. In early 2003, a farmhand position became available on his parent's property at Dardanup. Michael decided this was a good opportunity to join his parents in the business.

"It was a natural progression. I must admit it didn't happen without its fair share of arguments over the earlier years. Over time, my father and I grew respect for each other and we made it work," Michael said.

In 2006, the family decided to expand and purchased another dairy farm near Harvey. Michael's father slowly withdrew from the day to day operation of the business and over 8 and a half years, Michael gradually took responsibility for the whole operation.

"I entered an operating family business. In terms of becoming a farm owner, this was transitioned over the years as part of a succession plan created by my parents," he said.

Michael has been managing the family farm with his wife Sophia for 9 years, which is also home to their 3 young children, "they fancy themselves being farmers when they grow up," Michael said.

The farm milks 350 cows on 217 hectares with a further 232 hectares of leased land. Michael oversees the whole dairy operation and manages 2 full time farmhands. He is responsible for cow health, feeding and reproduction as well as dry cow, young stock and replacement heifer duties, plus farm, machinery maintenance and construction.

As part of his role, Michael ensures the business remains financially viable; he plans future tasks and purchases materials for the ongoing operation of the farm. He uses a computerised farm management

system and engages a financial consultant to track the operation's finances and future projections.

Michael believes resilience, innovation, intuition, and an ability to cope with different challenges are the key to being a successful farm owner. He appreciates that his role also has some challenges, such as tight margins and timeframes to complete tasks.

"I enjoy seeing positive results from decisions that I have made. Being my own boss and being flexible with my time is very important to me. I'm spread pretty thin between a dairy business, a gelato business and being a father but I love every second of it," he said.

In 2011, Michael was selected in the Developing Dairy Leaders Program (DDLDP). The program provides training to potential future leaders working in the dairy industry.

"It was a fantastic experience and I learnt so many new things. I met other people working in the dairy industry from across the country and from different parts of the industry," he said.

With 13 years of dairy farming experience, Michael plans to keep processing the family business. "We would like to keep improving in all aspects and make the business more profitable. Our goal is to grow our assets so we can have a comfortable retirement and also help our children in whatever career direction they wish to pursue."

"Another goal is to enjoy the wonderful lifestyle of dairy farming and reap the rewards that it has to offer."

Michael's advice to people thinking about farm ownership:

- Work hard - efficiency is the key
- Learn from your experiences and also the experiences of others - draw on these to improve your skills for the future



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

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

Stepping Stones

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Farm Owner

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
<i>Discuss my advancement with the Farm Owner</i>	<i>Next week</i>
<i>Enrol in Cert III Ag</i>	<i>2 weeks</i>
<i>Start saving</i>	<i>Now</i>

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

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



Planning Your Dairy Career

You can download this document at: 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

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		
Tractor		
Other farm equipment		
Cows		

Longer Term Planning – Training and Experience

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

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Diploma Ag

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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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