
The People in Dairy: 2006 to 2012 and beyond

A report on the progress of The People in Dairy program since its inception with suggestions for the future by Pauline Brightling, Anne Hope and Ruth Nettle on behalf of The People in Dairy Core Group



This report was constructed by the Core Group of Dairy Australia's *The People in Dairy* program to assist an external review of the program in November 2012.

In April 2013, the report was up-dated and an extract was used by the Australasian Pacific Extension Network (APEN) in awarding the biennial APEN Award for Excellence in Extension to Pauline Brightling and *The People in Dairy* Core Group team for their contribution to extension through the program.

Members of *The People in Dairy* Core Group team in 2012 were: Pauline Brightling, Leanne Bunn, Karen Baum, Anne Crawford, Chris Hibburt, Anne Hope, Lee-Ann Monks, Ruth Nettle and Helen Pitman. Previous members of the Core Group who also made significant contributions to the program were: Natalie Davey, Mike Ison, Trevor Westacott and Sylvia Vagg.



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Contents

Executive Summary	5
2006-2012: setting the scene	8
Domain characteristics that shaped the program design	8
About the program	10
Progress toward the objectives	16
Reflections on critical success factors.....	18
2012-2017: next steps	26
Domain characteristics that are likely to shape program design, 2012 to 2017.....	26
A view of the future of <i>The People in Dairy</i> , 2012-2017	28
What the future might look like	31
Fact files: an overview of project outputs from 2006-2012.....	33
Accountant Seminars	34
Adviser Forums	35
Adviser Insights	37
Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways	38
Communication Strategy	40
Cows Create Careers	42
DairySage	44
Dairy People Factfinder.....	45
Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)	46
In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands.....	48
Integration with other dairy programs	51
Large Herds Business Retreat	53
Leadership Blueprint.....	55
Online Resources	57
PeopleGPS.....	59
People Matters.....	61
Policy Input.....	63
Regional Planning.....	64
Retention Research.....	66
Valuing People in Dairy Business Success.....	68
Workforce Planning & Action	69
Young Dairy Farmer Network Hub.....	70
Narratives of change to 2012	71
APEN Award	95



The People in Dairy: 2006 to 2012 and beyond

This report:

- describes the progress toward *The People in Dairy* objectives
- explains how the capacity to manage people on Australia's 7,000 dairy farms is being built
- gives Fact Files on the different activities and outputs of the program
- provides a suite of 'narratives of change' by farmers and advisers resulting from program activities
- provides reflections on the key success factors in program design and implementation, and an outline of possible steps for the future.

Executive Summary

Dairy Australia's *The People in Dairy* program is designed to advance the profitability, sustainability and competitive advantage of the Australian dairy industry by improving the ability of farms to attract, retain and develop the people they need.

The People in Dairy is an industry-wide change management program. Since its inception in 2006, the program has worked to reframe thinking around the diverse ways in which people function within the whole-farm system – as farmers, managers, farm workers, new entrants or advisers. To achieve this, it has focused on the design and implementation of mechanisms to catalyse systemic change across work practices in the dairy farm environment and for regional workforce development. From 2006 to 2011 it also had a role in setting the industry strategy around leadership development.

To foster such change is a long-term process, particularly because it involves a transformation of attitudes and work cultures around people and not just transmission of information.

The People in Dairy has focused upon a range of strategies to effect such a shift in culture: including, for example, use of particular language and principles; research and demonstration of good practice on farms ('what success looks like'); provision of world-class online resources; capacity building in the advisory environment; modelling and piloting of methods for regional workforce development; and development of wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and working relationships (ranging from individual businesses to the Australian Dairy Farmers Policy Advisory Group).

The program has worked across the Research Development & Extension/Education spectrum. From 2006 to 2012 the program has been about identifying needs and issues, coming up with conceptual frameworks and creating core resources (and new knowledge), developing and resourcing high priority component projects that bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical, and championing the cause (with stakeholders, and by input to policy decisions where appropriate). It has been part of the Farm Portfolio in Dairy Australia.

The People in Dairy program addressed culture change around management of people on dairy farms, involving transformation of attitudes and behaviours.

Delivery elements undertaken in the program to achieve these outcomes were:

- Online resources – *The People in Dairy* website (www.thepeopleindairy.org.au).
- Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy) – developed and accredited specifically for this program.
- Adviser network and updates, ensuring that advisers maintained currency.
- Content and case studies for dairy media and newsletters.
- Farmer awareness activities and presentations.
- PeopleGPS (competency-based training – short courses for farmers).
- Business retreats tailored specifically to the challenges of larger farms.
- Research to underpin the program’s technical content.

These are detailed further in the *Fact Files* attached to this report.

A key design element was building advisory capacity. The premise was that farm advisers (farm consultants, extension officers, milk company field staff and financial advisers) are a first point of contact for farmers in thinking about their businesses and could be the front-line in cultural change on-farm around people.

The ways in which advice would be provided would vary, from general information provided by dairy company staff for groups of suppliers, through to specific one-on-one coaching in commercial consultancies.

The approach was to utilise the existing advisory relationships and expand them to include a people dimension, rather than attempting to introduce specialist human resource advisory services. The logic was that this gave the best chance of encouraging farmers to include people management in the culture of their farm business leadership and addressed issues at a whole-farm system scale.

The program’s ultimate success is measured in terms of change in culture and farmers’ confidence to manage their people issues. Examples of these changes are provided in this report as narratives from farmers. Although there is some baseline information about people indicators (brought together in the *Dairy People Factfinder*), more work is needed to track change in this domain, and one of the recommendations of the program team is that a process to collect relevant data be instituted.

The People in Dairy is now established as an industry-wide change management program and it is achieving significant success in reframing the vital people component of both individual farm businesses and the wider industry context. It is already well known by farmers and readily identified as a Dairy Australia program.

Dairy Australia’s stakeholder tracking research in 2011 showed that 71% of all farmers were aware of the program, and farms with more than 800 cows (larger employers) were nearly twice as likely to know of it than herds of less than 250 cows. Through a combination of direct engagement and via advisory services *The People in Dairy* is estimated to have connected with more than 2000 Australia dairy farms (about 30% of all farms or 42% of the about 4800 farms with employees).

The People in Dairy has become a prime focus of the industry’s attention. And if use of particular language and principles reflects culture, it is interesting to note that the industry now predominantly talks about ‘people’ rather than ‘labour units’, and those people as ‘assets’ not ‘costs’.

Farm advisers provide a front-line catalyst for change around people management on-farm.

By 2012, more than 2000 Australian dairy farms had used elements of *The People in Dairy* program such as:

- on-line resources
 - advice from trained advisers
 - short courses and workshops.
-

In order to build upon these successes, *The People in Dairy* team recommends that the following be undertaken in the next five year period:

- Integration of *The People in Dairy* principles into other Dairy Australia programs, in particular Farm Business Management.
- Integration with the Workforce Planning and Action program of work by the Dairy Industry People Development Council (in this regard, movement of the program to the Industry Capability and Skills Portfolio in Dairy Australia would make sense).
- Further targeting of delivery platforms, with emphasis on regional networks that include networks of farmers of excellence.
- Use of new technology (apps, podcasts) as part of the delivery suite.
- Focus on two areas of urgent need: Workplace Health & Safety and Business transitions.
- Support for advisers operating at multiple levels, especially business coaching.
- Regular farm survey and data collection.
- Possible integration of *The People in Dairy* with the people ventures of Research and Development Corporations in other sectors.



Kitchen table discussions and training with trusted advisers enhances farmers' confidence to manage their people.

2006-2012: setting the scene

A description of *The People in Dairy* 2006-2012:

- domain characteristics that shaped the program design
- about the program
- progress toward the objectives.
- reflections on critical success factors.

Domain characteristics that shaped the program design

The Australian dairy industry in 2006

- In 2006, Australian dairy farmers operated in an industry that, since 2000, had undergone major restructuring due to deregulation, drought and fluctuations in world markets.
- The Australian farmgate milk price was low by world standards so farmers had to run highly cost-efficient production systems.
- Most of the Murray Darling basin was in the grip of drought. The collective industry response to support farmers, 'Dairy Moving Forward', had highlighted to industry leaders that addressing the human-face of drought response was an important aspect of maintaining business confidence.
- The number of dairy farms continued to decline, to 8000 farms in 2006.
- Growth of farm businesses depended on milk prices, feed costs, water access, reliable seasons and access to competent people.

People on dairy farms in 2006

- Staff on farms were often referred to a 'labour units' and primarily thought of as a cost centre, not an asset. Some farm business management analyse defined low expenditure on labour as the objective in people management.
- The number of farms employing people had increased at more than 5% each year since 2004 and by 2006 was 60%.
- 59% of people working on farms were owners or managers, and 47% of these were over the age of 50 years.

- 74% of people working on farm were full-time, and 73% of full-time people working on dairy farms were men.
- Only 20% of farms with employees had formal position descriptions; 15% conducted performance reviews with employees; and 17% had written contracts with employees that conformed to the relevant award.
- About 1 in 4 farmers reported a farm-related injury in the previous 12 months, with half of all injuries caused by handling animals.

Source: 2006 data from the 2011 Dairy People Factfinder

The industry approach to the people domain in 2006

- The 2004 employment strategy commissioned by the Dairy Employment Management Committee (of the UDV) from the Australian Centre of Industrial Relations Research and Training at the University of Sydney¹ stated that the dairy industry was ‘an employer of last resort’ and recommended greater industry leadership in turning this situation around.
- In the broader Australian work context, in 2006, John Howard’s ‘WorkChoices’ put Industrial Relations on everyone’s mind so that providing some clarity for farmers in a changing environment of workplace relations was an imperative.
- In 2006, there was a strong appetite across the industry for work in this domain but no formal structures or arrangements. A review of projects funded in the industry to address issues like employer capability, attracting and retaining workers and profiling careers in dairy farming, had shown that ad-hoc and piecemeal efforts were having little lasting impact and a longer-term integrated approach was needed (Nettle and Johnson, 2005²).
- In 2006 Dairy Australia took an industry leadership role in the domain and began a new approach by investing in *The People in Dairy* program and the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA). The NCDEA provided a new way to guide vocational training in the industry.
- *Note:* In 2010 the Dairy Moving Forward RD&E Strategy committed investor organisations to a broader collaboration in a People Strategy; and in addition the Dairy Industry People Development Council was constituted (2011).

Providing clarity for farmers in a changing environment of workplace relations was an imperative.



1. ACIRRT is now called the Workplace Research Centre.
2. Nettle, R. and Johnson, R. 2006. *A Review of Employment Projects in the Australian Dairy Industry 1998-2006*, University of Melbourne, January.

About the program

The program is described below in terms of its scope, objectives, design principles and budget.

Scope of the program 2006-2012

From 2006 to 2011, *The People in Dairy* focussed on three areas in the people domain:

- A. Building capacity for effective use of the people resource on farms ('Farm').
- B. Effective regional workforce planning and action ('Workforce').
- C. Industry leadership development ('Leadership').

The program has worked across the Research Development & Extension/Education spectrum. This first phase of the program was about identifying needs and issues, coming up with conceptual frameworks and creating core resources, developing and resourcing high priority component projects, and championing the cause (with stakeholders, and by input to policy decisions where appropriate). It has been part of the Farm Portfolio in Dairy Australia.

From 2012, *The People in Dairy* refers to one of the components of the original program: to achieve optimal people management on farms. Because of an administrative change in Dairy Australia, the workforce development aspects of the original program were transferred to a different portfolio within Dairy Australia (Industry People & Capability). By 2013, the broad awareness (communications/media) aspects of the program were incorporated into Dairy Australia Corporate Communications, in line with an organisation-wide change to communications delivery.

Objectives of the program

In consultation with a wide range of stakeholders (starting with a 'Council of Wisdom' in 2007) the program established these high-level objectives:

1. Farms attract, retain and develop the people they need to meet their business visions.
2. Industry has the future leadership capacity it needs.

The objectives for the enabling environment were:

3. Clear, consistent, relevant information and resources are available.
4. Advisers have increased capacity to support farmers on people issues.
5. Industry programs have integrated a people framework into their design and delivery.
6. There is better workforce planning and more coordinated action in the regions and nationally.
7. Industry has an agreed strategy for leadership development.

Design principles

A program logic was mapped out in 2008 outlining the approach being taken to achieve the program's objectives. The nature of the interventions in each of the 'Farm', 'Workforce' and 'Leadership' areas (shown in red and blue on the diagram below) were guided by the following design principles.

A. Building capacity for effective use of the people resource on farms

On-farm, the improved management of people leads to more profitable and sustainable dairy businesses. The 'lived experience' of staff needs to be good to retain people within the industry.

The program's design logic identified the following cascade of outcomes as necessary to create the enabling and supportive environment for industry change with respect to people at the centre of farm business success:

- The fundamental principles that underpin success on-farm are defined.
- High-quality resources (current, relevant and aligned to the principles) are available to support change on-farm and farmers are aware of them and using them.
- Farmers in all regions have access to and are using high quality advice and training.
- Other dairy programs integrate appropriate people elements into their technical messages as their standard approach.
- The National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA) uses *The People in Dairy* materials and incorporates the principles into all their other training.

It was also considered very important that there is a demonstrated link between people and profitability/ business sustainability (this was the rationale for the 'Valuing People in Dairy Business Success' research project).

Core principles that underpin on-farm success:

- choose and resource farming approaches to suit people
- have the right people doing the right jobs at the right times
- develop and maintain effective working relationships
- consider everyone in the farm team – family, employees, contractors and service providers.

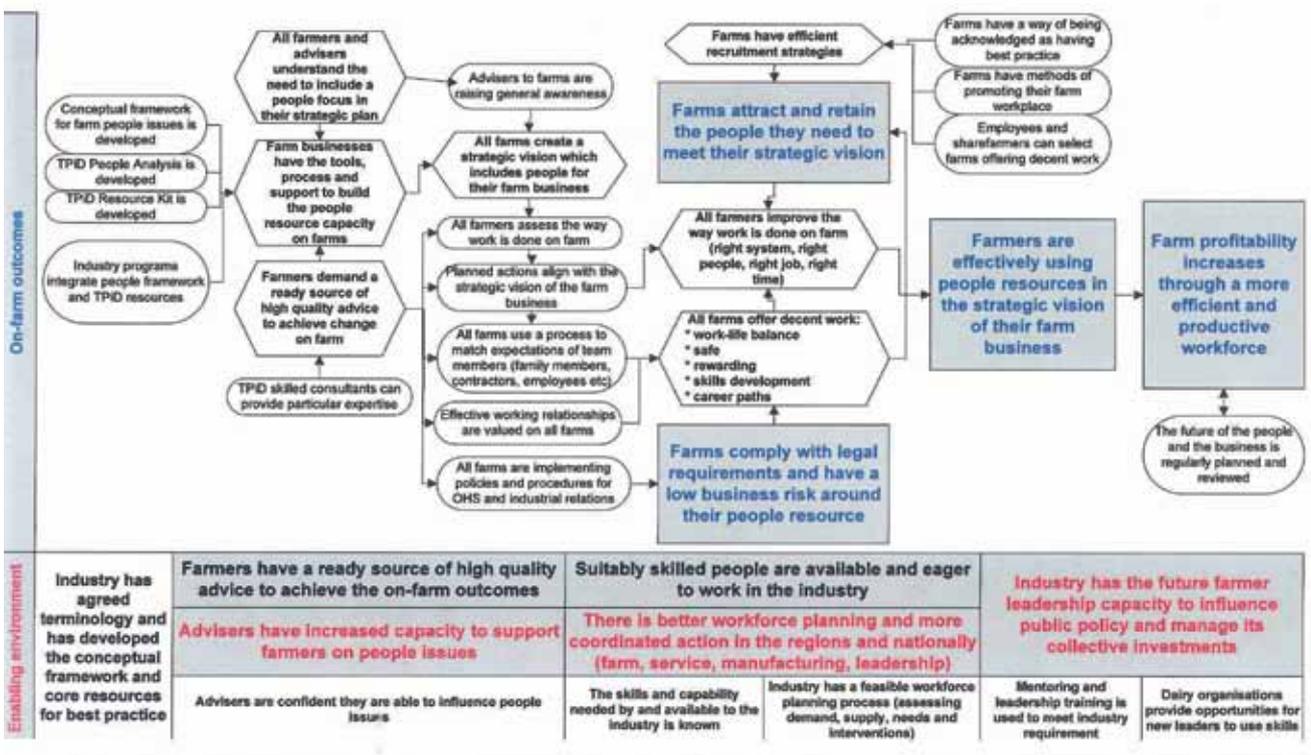
People are core to success in the dairy industry

By 2018, 70% of dairy farmers are satisfied with their work (reversing the current situation of 69% of farmers dissatisfied)
 * TPD aims to get a critical mass of farms achieving the on-farm outcomes by setting-up an 'enabling' environment
 * A key principle is to have farm systems built to suit people - to improve performance and reduce burn-out
 * Success relies on consideration of ALL people who work on the farm; including family members, sharefarmers, employees and contractors
 * The core resources and approach need to deal with regional differences in farm systems, communities, skilled advisers and legislation
 * TPD enables the industry to promote its people capacity in the farm sector by giving good direction and support to current and future investments

Intervention
Outcome
Objective

The People in Dairy

Program objectives 24/03/2008



The program logic as mapped out in March 2008.

A key premise was that farm advisers are the first point of contact for farmers in thinking about their businesses and could be the front-line in cultural change on-farm around people. The ways in which advice is provided would vary from general information provided by dairy company staff for groups of suppliers to specific one-on-one coaching in commercial consultancies. The design was to utilise the existing advisory relationships and expand them to include a people dimension, rather than attempting to introduce specialist HR advisory services. The logic was that this gave the best chance of encouraging farmers to include people management in the culture of their farm business leadership.

To achieve this, advisory capacity would require the following outcomes:

- Advisers build and maintain the capacity to advise farmers on people and offer a range of relevant services.
- Other dairy advisers and organisations direct their clients to *The People in Dairy* trained advisers and resources.

See the Fact Files:

- Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)
- Adviser Forums
- Adviser Seminars
- Online Resources
- People Matters

The People in Dairy established multiple pathways for building advisers' capacity so they could help drive and/or support change on farm for people issues. These included:

- Training of advisers through the Diploma Human Resource Management (Dairy).
- Providing resources for them to use with farmer clients to assess current farm situation, identify priorities and act.
- Alerting them to topics of interest through the People Matters newsletter.
- Introducing *The People in Dairy* program at a series of workshops and meetings for advisers.
- Providing opportunities for advisers to put the learning into practice and be seen as champions in the domain. Examples of these opportunities were training and contracting of diploma graduates to deliver information sessions to farmers, the PeopleGPS course or Large Herds Business Retreats (public/private collaboration).
- Holding regular Adviser Forums to provide updates on key topics.
- Providing other professionals (such as accountants) with more dairy-specific information.
- Working to have the people resource routinely considered as part of any technical recommendation – integration with other dairy programs.

Another key design premise was that by establishing all the resources for the program in a single online location, the information, templates and tools could be kept up-to-date and would be easily accessible to virtually all farmers (either directly, or through their advisers). *The People in Dairy* has been strongly committed to maintaining the currency and accuracy of the resources to build confidence in the program as the 'go-to' place for the domain. All communications and training activities refer to the online resources. (Interestingly, a challenge with this approach has been that some people have seen the online resources as the whole of *The People in Dairy* program – focussing only the tools).

See the Fact Files:

- Integration with other dairy programs

An indirect but important pathway to making change on farm was to work with the leaders other programs to imbue a people approach into the technical recommendations of their projects. This approach was piloted with specific elements of Cool Cows, InCalf and Countdown.



Having all the resources online meant they could be kept up-to-date and were accessible to farmers and advisers.

B. Building the capacity for workforce planning and action

Industry-level workforce planning and action is needed to underpin farm sector development. The design of the program elements of *The People in Dairy* in this area was focussed on better understanding the needs and processes for collective workforce development to ensure a sufficient supply of employees and new entrants for the industry by influencing public policy, training provision, and employment services. The premise was that this would require both a regional and national capacity.

To achieve an increase in this capacity for industry-level workforce planning and action, the program design logic identified the following required outcomes:

- Regions are motivated and confident to take a lead.
- Regions are able to regularly track workforce needs (key data is collected, collated and interpreted, centrally and regionally) and regions can customise responses.
- The industry can make connections with other players (non-dairy) who influence regional employment pools.
- Dairy farms are seen as employers of choice (which links to the on-farm part of the program).
- The career path in dairy is articulated and promoted.

*“It’s great to be able to go to **The People in Dairy** website and access the information and templates which cover every aspect of employing staff in a farm business, as well as having the backup of people trained in employment and human resources.”*

– Roma Britnell, dairy farmer, western Victoria

The range of award classifications and typical remuneration rates 2012

Source: The People in Dairy website

Job category and features	Pastoral Award 2010 *	Training level **	Remuneration range ***
Assistant farm hand Works under supervision	FLH1	Cert II	\$32-45,000
Farm hand Works under limited supervision	FLH3	Cert III	\$33-50,000
Senior farm hand Skilled, works independently or as part of a team;	FLH5	Cert IV	\$40-60,000
Production manager Production management responsibilities; has broad industry knowledge & advanced technical skills	FLH7	Diploma	\$60-75,000
Senior production manager /Farm supervisor Supervises staff, production activities & contributes to business management	FLH8	Diploma	\$75-90,000
Business manager Sets policy, responsible for successful management of the dairy enterprise	No award	Advanced diploma	\$90-130,000

* All Pastoral Award classifications relevant to dairying are shown here, where FLH = Farm and Livestock Hand, levels 1-8

** The training level gives an indication of what to expect for each job classification (and is not a requirement for inclusion in a classification or determining pay rate)

*** This column gives examples of the range of rates typically seen in the industry (market wage rates rather than the legislated minimum pay rate)

See the Fact Files:

- Workforce Planning and Action
- In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands
- Dairy People Factfinder
- Cows Create Careers

Activities undertaken in the program to achieve these outcomes were primarily around developing and testing a model for regional workforce planning and action in one region (Western Victoria), creating the first Dairy People Factfinder, providing the response to a Victorian Government Inquiry, and supporting Cows Create Careers delivery.

The national level capacity in workforce development has been enhanced by the creation of the Dairy Industry People Development Council in 2011. Projects in workforce development for manufacturers, service providers and farms (two pilot regions) were initiated in 2012 through the Council.

The range of job categories in dairy was defined by *The People in Dairy* program with the NCDEA. This has allowed the career path to be articulated and promoted and related to the relevant Award levels.

C. Building the capacity for industry leadership development

Dairy industry organisations and businesses need leaders. The design of the program elements of *The People in Dairy* in this area was focussed on better understanding the requirements for industry leadership development (types of roles to be filled and numbers needed) and the ways in which the industry could provide opportunities for new leaders to gain skills and take up effective roles in leadership.

To achieve an increase in this capacity for leadership development, the program design logic identified the following required outcomes:

- Leadership roles are well understood.
- Leadership development opportunities are coordinated across the industry.
- Dairy organisations have processes in place to provide opportunities for people to be leaders.

The activities that were undertaken in the program to achieve these outcomes were primarily around articulating the three tiers of industry leadership needed to address district, regional, state, national and international issues, and facilitation of an industry-wide 'blueprint' strategy for leadership development which was launched by the dairy industry peak body, the Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC), in December 2010. Some leadership development opportunities were also funded by Dairy Australia through the program (for example, Australian Rural Leadership Program and Nuffield Scholarship positions).

The People in Dairy provided design and management support for the DairySage mentoring initiative funded by the Gardiner Foundation.

Budget

Dairy Australia has invested on average of \$825,000 per year in *The People in Dairy* since 2006 (see table below). Of this:

- 57% of the spend has been developing and delivering projects around optimal people management on farms (Farm).
- 32% has been spent on workforce planning and action initiatives (Workforce).
- 11% on industry leadership development activities (Leadership).

In addition, this Dairy Australia investment has been able to leverage funds totally \$550,000 directly or in support of the program:

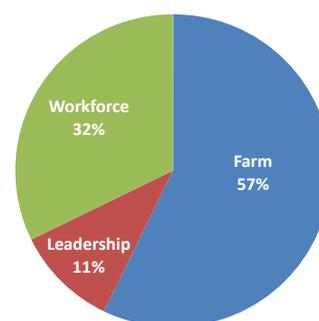
- 2006 – Victorian Government (Regional Development Victoria) grant of \$160,000 towards the development of the online resources (completed).
- 2006 – Federal Government (Department Employment & Workplace Relations) support of \$50,000 for WorkChoices seminars for dairy farmers (completed).
- 2008 – Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation research of \$75,000 for Workforce Planning and Action for the Dairy Industry by the Rural Innovation Research Group (completed).
- 2009 – Victorian Government (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development – VictoriaWorks program) support of \$160,000 for In2Dairy as a pilot recruitment project (completed).
- 2010 – Helen Macpherson Smith Trust support of \$60,000 for In2Dairy.
- 2011 – Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation research of \$50,000 on retention of people in dairyfarming conducted by the Rural innovation Research Group (completed).

Dairy Australia's investment in *The People in Dairy* program.

Area	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Farm	367,046	422,707	495,537	418,161	510,286	616,906
Leadership	118,551	94,360	121,390	139,685	47,106	
Workforce	145,588	192,931	235,618	329,585	432,153	260,677
Total	\$631,185	\$709,998	\$852,545	\$887,431	\$989,544	\$877,584

See the Fact Files:

- Leadership Blueprint
- DairySage
- Young Dairy Farmer Network Hub



More than half the budget was spent to support change on farms.

Dairy Australia has leveraged \$550,000 of funds in support of program activities over the six years.

Progress toward the objectives

Since its inception in 2006, *The People in Dairy* program has worked to reframe industry-wide thinking around the diverse ways in which people function within the whole-farm system – as farmers, managers, farm workers, new entrants, advisers etc. To achieve this degree of culture shift, the program has focused on the design and implementation of diverse mechanisms to catalyse systemic change across work practices in the dairy farm environment and for regional workforce development.

To foster such change is a long-term process, particularly because it involves a transformation of attitudes and work cultures around people and not just a transmission of information. *The People in Dairy* has therefore focused upon a range of differing strategies in order to effect such a shift in culture, including, for example:

- use of particular language and principles;
- research and demonstration of good practice on farms ('what success looks like');
- provision of world-class online resources;
- capacity building in the advisory environment;
- modelling and piloting of methods for regional workforce development; and
- development of wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and working relationships (ranging from individual businesses to the Australian Dairy Farmers Policy Advisory Group).

Some of these activities are already completed, others in progress, others only at the piloting stage.

The outcomes of the program activities designed to assist on-farm change are detailed in the *Fact Files* attached to this report.

In summary:

- World-class online resources are now available on *The People in Dairy* website with over 4,500 visitors per week. 63,000 templates and tools were downloaded in 2012.
- 116 advisers and farmers have enrolled in the Diploma HRM (Dairy) and two-thirds report that they are now providing 'more' or a 'lot more' people-related services to farmer clients.
- 56 accountants have participated in dairy-specific industrial relations up-dates.
- Dairy media and newsletters have published an average of 26 articles and case studies per month, giving a rich description of 'best practice' and how to achieve it.
- More than 200 farmers have participated in the 4-day course PeopleGPS or its precursor 5-day People Focus Discussion Groups.
- 37 businesses representing more than 300M litres of milk supply have participated in the large herds business retreat with a people focus (specifically about setting up farms to attract and retain managers).
- Research results on retention, valuing people in business success and using advisers have been incorporated into the program design.
- The industry has its first comprehensive collation of available statistics and other data on its people dimension in the 2011 Dairy People Factfinder.

***The People in Dairy* has reached a wide audience:**

- there are more than 4500 visits to the online resources each week
 - rural and dairy media publish an average of 26 articles per month
 - at least 80 service providers from across Australia are regularly using the program principles and resources with their clients.
-

See the Fact Files:

- Online Resources
- Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)
- Accountant Seminars
- Communication Strategy
- PeopleGPS
- Large Herds Business Retreat
- Retention Research
- Valuing People in Dairy Business Success
- Adviser Insights

Dairy Australia's stakeholder tracking research in 2011 showed that 71% of all farmers were aware of the program, and farms with over 800 cows (larger employers) were nearly twice as likely to know of it than herds of less than 250 cows. Through a combination of direct engagement and via advisory services *The People in Dairy* is estimated to have connected with more than 2000 Australian dairy farms (about 30% of all dairy farms or 42% of the 4800 farms with employees).

The People in Dairy has now become a prime focus of the industry's attention, and if use of particular language and principles reflects culture – in 2012 the industry predominantly talks about 'people' as assets, not 'labour units' as costs.

An advantage of having an active industry presence in the people domain was the ability to technically underpin the policy response of industry to issues such as the negotiation of the federal Pastoral Award 2010. In this case negotiation by the National Farmers Federation on overtime conditions has been estimated to save dairy farmers about \$20 million per year.

See Fact File:

– Policy Input



*Employing trainee Brianna Timms was a relatively straight forward process for dairy farmer Kerry Callow, thanks to *The People in Dairy* resources and training.*

Reflections on critical success factors

The key ways in which Dairy Australia invested in this domain, and the approaches used in the design and delivery of the program have all influenced the emergence, evolution and outcomes of *The People in Dairy*. The critical factors for success are:

- Dairy Australia's commitment to the mode and quantum of investment in the people domain.
- Leadership of the program.
- Management and administration of the program.
- Building off what is already known or has been done to establish the new strategy.
- Engaging an effective team for development.
- Establishing the core principles of the domain and using them as the foundation for everything.
- Establishing all the resources on a purpose-built web platform.
- Focusing on the sphere of influence of farm advisers (rather than Human Resource specialists).
- Engaging an effective team for delivery.
- Collaborating with the industry training body (NCDEA) for alignment of resources and co-delivery.
- Integrating on-farm activities with industry-level workforce planning and action.
- Maintaining the cutting-edge, depth and challenge of *The People in Dairy* program by having an active research component.

Dairy Australia's commitment to the mode and quantum of investment in the people domain

This involved:

- Understanding that this is a large area with many angles – employment, succession, workforce development and capacity building.
- Willingness to invest a significant amount over a considerable period.
- Willingness to invest in the R&D as well as the Extension/Education components.
- Willingness to see it as an industry-wide change management program, not just extension messages.
- Allowing sufficient flexibility in the iterative design to achieve the best matches to needs.

Leadership of the program

- Having an experienced industry person (Pauline Brightling) with time dedicated to leading the program and passion for the domain – providing a vision for all the components.
- Having a leader with a large network and respect from previous successes in industry-wide change management, who is able to engage the relevant stakeholders.
- Having a leadership style that privileges and nurtures team work and collaborative relationships. Relationships are dynamic things that require respect and acknowledgement, not only for the well-being of individuals, but for the maximum effectiveness of the program and outcomes.



Pauline Brightling led *The People in Dairy* program from its inception in 2006 to 2012.

Management and administration of the program

- Establishing effective management to ensure that the vision of the program is translated into appropriate actions.
- Providing adequate administrative support (Dairy Australia for contracts; Harris Park Group for general program administration and project support).

Building off what is already known or has been done to establish the new strategy

- Researching the prior investments / experiences early on. Examples of these type of foundational reviews included:
 - Employment projects review (Nettle and Johnson, 2005³)
 - Leadership review (Manners and Baum, 2007⁴)
 - Dairy InSight strategy development in New Zealand (participation in 2006)
 - Review of workforce planning and action in other industries (Nettle, 2009).

Engaging an effective team for development

- Engaging the individuals / groups already working in the domain (eg Mike Stephens and Associates, The Vet Group, John Mulvany, Ruth Nettle, Jennie Corkhill). Acknowledging their experience and status and paying for their input.
- Having subject matter experts and people with respected experience on farm, linked in a team approach (each with specific responsibilities). It is essential to have individuals who are team players, aligned with the fundamental philosophy of the program, passionate about the domain and finisher-completers. Examples include:
 - The Core Group, who understood the whole program (and whose members have changed over time as the key elements of the program evolved).
 - Jennie Corkhill an experienced solicitor with an interest in Industrial Relations law.
 - Andrew Sullivan an independent authority in the area of Workplace Health & Safety.
 - Chris Hibburt a senior dairy veterinary consultant for engagement with advisers and large herds.
 - Karen Baum a consultant and dairy farmer for engagement with young farmers.
 - Anne Crawford a social researcher with experience in agricultural extension for tracking change in practices of advisers.
 - Karen Baum and Anne Crawford for connection with Dairy Australia's Regional Development Programs.
 - Lcubed and Helen Pitman for design of the website.
 - Anne Hope for data analysis (for example, the Dairy People Factfinder).

Establishing the core principles of the domain and using them as the foundation for everything

The People in Dairy framework underpinning 'Farm' contained:

Elements of on-farm change (the cascade of farmers' needs)

- Compliance – needs to be right (IR laws – Federal, State; Workers compensation; Equal opportunity; Workplace Health & Safety; Superannuation; Tax).
- Human Resources Processes – appropriate processes set up & working provide structure and efficiencies.
- Culture and leadership – really the main game.

3. Nettle, R. and Johnson, R. 2006. *A Review of Employment Projects in the Australian Dairy Industry 1998-2006*, University of Melbourne, January .

4. Manners, J. and Baum, K. 2007. *A Review of leadership and professional development projects and programs in the Australian dairy industry 1997-2006*, Report to Dairy Australia, January.

Four principles underpinning on-farm change

1. Choose and resource your farming approaches to suit people.
2. Have the right people doing the right jobs at the right times.
3. Develop and maintain effective working relationships – clarity, respect and flexibility.
4. Consider everyone in the farm team – family, employees, contractors, service providers.

'The Navigator': A framework for considering people issues within the overall farming system.



The Navigator – a conceptual framework developed by The People in Dairy.

Establishing all the resources on a purpose-built web platform

- Re-writing and up-dating the resources in 'real time' as major and minor changes were required (for example as Industrial Relations shifted from state legislation to WorkChoices, to the Fair Work Act, and the modern award system – Pastoral Award 2010, and with transitional pay rates that change each year). Use of the web as the platform enables information to always be up-to-date.
- Locating all the resources for the program – information, templates and tools – together in one place which is easily accessible.
- Linking to the Dairy Australia site (and strongly branding Dairy Australia), but able to provide an architecture specific for the domain.
- Ability of the program team to construct and edit the site's architecture and content.
- Tracking web analytics to learn about/from user experiences.

Focusing on the sphere of influence of farm advisers (rather than Human Resource specialists)

- Increasing the capacity of farm advisers to be the front-line in cultural change on-farm around people management.
- Targeting a wide range of advisers – dairy company field officers, trainers, farm consultants, and peer farmers owning or managing large farms (also a source of advice for other farmers).
- Not starting with specialist HR advisers (this would need farmers to already know that they wanted these services, and likely limit to process rather than culture change).

Engaging an effective team for delivery

- Expanding the team progressively to include new members – extending the ‘footprint’ of the program.
- Using local advisers as presenters at meetings to build their experience and reputation. Examples include:
 - Penny Williams delivered an employment presentation in Tasmania (she subsequently applied for and has been appointed as the Workforce Planning and Action coordinator in Tasmania).
 - Warwick Waters facilitated at the Large Herds Business Retreat in Qld
 - Cam Smith has delivered PeopleGPS courses, a Large Herds Business Retreat and Countdown-*The People in Dairy* workshops for advisers in northern Victoria
 - Matt Makin presented elements of a successful employment relationship to an in-house training session at WestVic Staffing Solutions (WSS). WSS now offer traineeships into the dairy industry.
 - Mark Jago presented on career progression in dairying at a Young Dairy Development Program event in Gippsland and subsequently facilitated other workshops.
 - Angus Drummond described his personal experiences and professional advisory work as an overseas visa holder at work in Australia.
 - Trevor Westacott delivered a Workplace Health & Safety review in Far North Queensland and then in Western Victoria.
- Once program is happening, looking for ‘merge lanes’ for others, especially influential others. Avoiding the ‘club’ image. Asking senior industry figures to participate in activities – so the program learns from them, and they know more about the program. Examples include:
 - John Mulvany helping to develop leasing resources and deliver to the Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy).
 - Patten Bridge, Rob Brown reviewing Online resource modules.
 - Adrian Kennelly contributing to business transitions planning.



Anne Crawford and John Kane at the 2012 Adviser Forum.

- Utilising as wide a range of third party opportunities to connect with farmers as possible, with full spectrum of broad awareness to one-on-one consultations (and not being too anxious about attribution – for a good program there will still be very good recognition⁵). Examples include:
 - Running WorkChoices seminars (x4 in late 2006) with Australian Dairy Farmers (Jennie Corkhill, Mike Stephens).
 - Contribution of ‘People Basics’ tool into Murray Goulburn FarmCare.
 - Young Dairyfarmer Development Program participation.
 - Communications through industry newsletters and publications, for example *The Devondaler*.
 - Incorporation into other programs, such as Countdown, Cool Cows and InCalf.
 - Revising the Taking Stock tool to include a People snapshot component.
 - Delivery within the SubTropical Dairy Program Industrial Relations workshops (2012).

The People in Dairy messages were delivered to farmers via many ‘third party’ mechanisms.



Young Dairy Development Program
“Developing Dairy Communities”




4 Teats - Churn Milk into Money presents

“Building great working relationships on farm”

Date: **Tuesday July 10th**

Venue: Century Inn, 5 Airfield Rd,
Princes Highway, Traralgon

Time: 10.30am till 3:00pm

Cost: \$25 includes morning tea & lunch

Come along and find out makes a good working relationship on dairy farms.



Morning session: Step through the process of advertising and interviewing and then creating a good working environment for staff and managers including performance reviews.

Afternoon session: Two farmers talk about their experiences; What makes a good boss? What makes a good employee? Good take-home messages to use immediately.

Facilitated by Mark Jago, Murray Goulburn

Everyone is welcome to attend,
RSVP to Irene by **Friday July 6th**
Ph: 5624 3900 or 0428 889 337 or email
yddpgipps@gippsdairy.com.au



Developed by YDDP. All are welcome! See www.yddp.org.au for more information





Proudly supported by Fonterra Australia, Bonlac Supply Company, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory Co Ltd, Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co Ltd, Department of Primary Industries, Gardiner Foundation, United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Irwin Stockfeeds, National Centre for Dairy Education Australia-GOTAFE

5. Dairy Australia Stakeholder Tracking #14 showed that within 3 years of the ‘launch’ of *The People in Dairy* via the online resources, 71% of farmers knew about the program, and 72% of them knew it is levy funded.

Collaborating with the industry training body (NCDEA) for alignment of resources and co-delivery.

- Working collaboratively with the NCDEA to co-develop the resources and build the training elements (Diploma HRM; PeopleGPS). This allows the materials to be developed in the context of competency frameworks rather than ‘retro-fitted’ later. This collaboration was made possible by the concurrent timing of the start of both *The People in Dairy* and NCDEA (in 2006). The NCDEA co-invested in the work and had staff as members of the program Core Group. Strong working relationships are important in making this a success.
- Delivery of training in conjunction with the NCDEA provides the opportunity for participants to gain a qualification. This is particularly important with the Diploma because advisers moving into a new area of consultancy want a qualification to underpin their services.

Integrating on-farm activities with industry-level workforce planning and action

- Having the on-farm and industry-level efforts within the one program provided strong cross-links. For example in the In2Dairy project, sourcing and providing pre-employment training for employees was complemented with choice of suitable farms for employment, and support for farmers in their employer roles.
- The ability of the dairy industry to attract and retain its current and future workforce is dependent on having current dairy farms offering well designed jobs, excellent working conditions and a commitment to address employee-side needs. Linking improved people management on-farm into an industry workforce planning and action strategy is defined as a systemic approach to industry workforce development. Improving overall people management at the farm-level provides individual benefit to farms, however actively linking improved farm performance into industry workforce planning and action creates public benefits (greater integration between education providers, government policies and industry needs).



The People in Dairy collaborated with the NCDEA to develop custom-made resources and training programs.

See Fact Files:

- [Alpine Valley Dairy Pathways](#)
- [In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands](#)

Maintaining the cutting-edge, depth and challenge of *The People in Dairy* program by having an active research component

Research questions and areas are derived from the key issues identified by the program and, in turn, are integrated into an enriched implementation. Examples of this important reciprocity between research questions and program design and activities in *The People in Dairy* are given below.

2006: How do we measure productivity / people analysis?

These questions inform the development and critical analysis of indicators that could be used to track change at a farm, regional and program level.⁶

This work has been ongoing and has resulted in new research into measures of the link between farm business success and people management and how to develop useful metrics of turnover for a farm and at a regional level. The cost and suitability of survey measures to track base-line indicators has proved problematic and is further confounded when analysis of farm-level labour productivity measures yield no correlation with farm profit (analysis of dairy farm monitor results, 2010). This link between farm business success and people management has subsequently evolved into the Valuing People research project.

2008: Workforce planning and action: how can an industry like dairy achieve effective workplace planning and action?

The People in Dairy core group, the University of Melbourne's Rural Innovation Research Group (RIRG), together with the NCDEA's (National Centre of Dairy Education Australia) wanted to know more about the people capability needs of the dairy industry. They jointly identified a gap in understanding: how regional groups could support the attraction and retention of people in farming, particularly with an ageing workforce and competition for people with record low unemployment rates. A project was jointly funded by the Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation and Dairy Australia to research ways to better plan and act in workforce development. An action research process in the Baw Baw shire in West Gippsland⁷ led to a working model for other regional groups which is now being applied in two other dairy regions in 2012 (Tasmania and Western Victoria) and development of a national farm workforce development plan.

In addition, the cotton sector, through the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, was interested in applying the regional workforce planning and action approach developed through dairy and planned to trial and adapt the workforce planning and action approach for cotton between 2008-2011. This is resulting in cross-sectoral learning and new research questions concerning the relative strengths and weaknesses of regional or industry-centred workforce planning approaches.

Better data concerning people in the dairy industry was also seen as a critical issue. In conjunction with RIRG and the Workplace Research Centre (University of Sydney), a compilation of a "state of the nation" type report on people for the dairy industry was developed: the 'Dairy People Factfinder'. Questions have been requested in the Situation and Outlook survey to gather appropriate data to inform the workforce strategy and *The People in Dairy* program.

See Fact Files:

- Valuing People in Dairy Business Success
- Workforce Planning and Action
- Regional Planning

6. Nettle, R.A. and Stephens, M. (2006) *How will we know we've made a difference? Terminology, indicators and definitions in farm employment – a position for "People in Dairy"*. June 28, 2006.

7. Nettle, R. and Oliver, D. 2009, *Workforce planning and action for the Australian dairy industry. The People in Dairy: People Capability for the farm sector (Stage 1, Modules 1 to 3)*. ISBN 9780734040725.

2008: In2Dairy: how does a specific implementation in Workforce Planning and Action work?

In conducting research into the regional collective action required in dairy industry workforce development, an opportunity emerged to work with the Brotherhood of St Lawrence, employment service providers and regional dairy groups in a project of Dairy Australia's to explore entry paths for disadvantaged workers into farm work. Running in Western Victoria, a pilot program (In2Dairy) successfully placed and trained 18 people into farm work. Through RIRG's role in supporting the evaluation of the program, dimensions of ethical collective action in rural development have been researched, resulting in publications.⁸

2009: Effect of adviser / farmer relationships in this area: how is this key plank of the program working? Are there things we need to do differently?

The People in Dairy interventions continue to emphasise the importance of effective working relationships as a central platform for dairy business success and have encouraged reflection on how to create a farm business suited to the people.⁹

The effects and change in a sample of farmers and advisers was being monitored over time as part of the *Adviser Insights* research.¹⁰

2010: Retention: What do we know about the great farms? How do we use this to underpin the retention of a stable and effective farm workforce?

A concerning level of turnover amongst different categories of dairy farm staff (up to 50% per year in some work categories), was noted in analysis of employment trends. Dairy regional groups in Victoria expressed concern to *The People in Dairy* that their initiatives and investments in attracting people into the dairy industry were less effective if people were then not being retained. This triggered a regional partnership research proposal to the Gardiner foundation to investigate turnover and retention in Victorian dairy farming, values and practice of high-retention farms and the development of regional retention strategies.¹¹ Now, Dairy Australia is investing in research to better measure turnover on-farm and also regional level turnover metrics.

2011: Measuring retention: matching Dairy Australia targets

The ongoing need to demonstrate the value to farm businesses from improved people management prompted research questions concerning how to best measure the relational dimension of employment and the link to farm profit and other measures of farm business success. The Valuing People research project pilot was funded by Dairy Australia and applied the concept of the psychological contract (organisational psychology) to develop greater understanding of the benefits to farm businesses.¹²

See Fact Files:

- In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands
- Adviser Insights
- Retention Research

8. Nettle, R. Oliver, D. Brightling, P. Williamson, J. Buchanan, J. 2008, From "Workforce Planning" to "Collective Action": Developments in the Australian dairy farm sector. *Employment Relations Record* Vol 8, No 1, 17-34.
9. Nettle, R., Paine, M. and Petheram, J. 2006, *Improving employment relationships – Findings from learning interventions in farm employment*. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations* 31(1): 21-36.
10. Crawford, A., Nettle, R. Brightling, P. and Hibburt, C. 2010. *Enhancing the liveability of farm systems: supporting new farm and advisory practices in the Australian dairy industry* In: Darnhofer, I. and M. Grötzer (Eds.) (2010). *Building sustainable rural futures. The added value of systems approaches in times of change and uncertainty*. Vienna: BOKU University, 2256 pp. (9th Symposium) http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/fileadmin/Proceeding2010/2010_WS2.3_Crawford.pdf
11. Nettle, R., Semmelroth, A., Ullah, A., Zheng, C. & Ford, R. (2011). *Retention of people in dairyfarming – what is working and why? Final report to the Geoffrey Gardiner Foundation*. The University of Melbourne. Australia.
12. Ford, R., Nettle, R., Brightling, P., Hibburt, C. (2012) UM13635: *Valuing People – Pilot Phase Milestone Report 2 to Dairy Australia (interim report – 29 June 2012)*. Rural Innovation Research group, University of Melbourne.

2012-2017: next steps

Thoughts about *The People in Dairy* program into the future:

- Domain characteristics that are likely to shape the program design
- A view of the future of *The People in Dairy* (2012-2017)
- A hypothetical of what the future might look like.

Domain characteristics that are likely to shape program design, 2012 to 2017

Planning for the future is important for dairy programs as well as businesses and individuals. What is right for 2012 will not be what is needed in 2017, and the program will need to evolve to respond to changes in the domain (both from external drivers and the successes and lessons of the program itself). The program team has begun to conceptualise the next steps, with these preliminary thoughts.

The Australian dairy industry by 2017

- Trends in dairy farm business growth and ownership indicate that 'family corporate farms' are likely to dominate. These are large farms with a single milk harvesting unit of 1000 -3000 cows or multiple smaller operations of 500-1500 cows. The family corporates will continue to invest back into the dairy industry as it is their area of expertise and they will make substantial profits annually. They bring the dual advantages of family commitment and a large business resource base.
- Corporate/investment farms will likely operate as: franchises where managers have some equity in stock; or farms managed by staff with no equity; or as lease farms. Corporate operations will more likely succeed if they have very simple farming systems and include management in equity and profit share.
- Leasing of farms owned by corporates, other investors or exiting dairy farmers is likely to become a safer and more attractive option once a realistic expectation of lease costs/returns is accepted from owners and lessees. (Return on assets of 3-4% for owners may seem low in comparison to other investments, but is offset by the advantages of continued ownership of the farm and the security of the industry).
- Conversions in less highly valued farming areas with secure access to feed, may well become the preferred option for investment on a larger scale.
- There will be a vibrant small farm sector too. Automatic milking systems may increase in popularity in lifestyle areas closer to cities.
- Farms will most likely be operated at higher stocking rates to offset the high cost of capital in land investment.

Financial success and public trust will require high standards around the management of people, animal health, food safety and natural resources on dairy farms.

-
- Milk processors will pay higher prices to the larger farms to reflect the savings and value they see in high volume suppliers.
 - Sustainability credentialing will be a significant driver in farm management with four main issues: people, animal health, resource management and food safety.

People on dairy farms by 2017

- The number of employees per farm will increase. In 2011, only 5% of farms had more than 6 paid employees; this could double in the next five years. Some farm businesses will be relatively large employers with more than 20 people.
- Keys to successful dairy operations will include:
 - Management has some ownership and hence risk (they will be responsible for most of the people management).
 - Investment in technology captures efficiencies and makes an attractive work place.
 - Farming systems are simple.
 - Feed base is well sourced and risk managed.
- Access to information and training will largely be online, with very fast internet speeds and new delivery platforms available for all farms.
- Potential roles for advisers are as:
 - Technical experts who provide services in Industrial Relations advice, recruitment and processes of management; or
 - Business coaches who specialize in Human Resource Management and who assist a farm business to design and implement its strategies effectively through a focus on effective management of its people.

The industry approach to the people domain by 2017

- Dairy Moving Forward has set priorities and broad strategy for all investors in the domain.
- Dairy Australia has set targets for each broad investment area for 2012-17. The relevant targets in the people domain are:
 - All farmers have access to and awareness of high quality (current and relevant) resources, advice and training to improve attraction, retention and development of staff. By 2017 80% of farmers with employees will have used these resources, advice or training.
 - Dairy farmers recognise people management as a key driver of sustained farm business success, such that by 2017, tenure of employees on farms will have increased by 20%.

A view of the future of *The People in Dairy*, 2012-2017

The People in Dairy Core Group offers the following thoughts around design and management with a view to continuing the program's momentum of change in this domain:

- Integrating much more with other programs, especially Farm Business Management.
- Integrating with Workforce Planning and Action.
- Establishing delivery platforms segmented by community of practice or farming system.
- Regional focus for delivery.
- Farmers acting together – networks of excellence.
- Advisers operating at multiple levels (and supported).
- Resources more accessible with technological advances.
- Focus on specific topic areas – Workplace Health & Safety and Business transitions.
- Regular farm survey of (currently missing) indicators and key case studies.
- Cross-sector collaboration by Research & Development Corporations.

Integrating much more with other programs, especially Farm Business Management

- The first steps in integrating the principles of *The People in Dairy* with other programs have been made with technical areas such as milk quality, fertility and animal health (given that take-up of their technical messages is highly linked to effective people management). There should be further work in this area.
- In the future, much greater integration with Farm Business Management will be required (especially for the larger dairy businesses). This is where the impact across the whole business of getting people management right must be emphasised.

Integrating with Workforce Planning and Action (eg overseas staff, Dairy Australia's 'Farm regional plans')

- The cross-links between on-farm and industry-level programs need to be kept alive – they are different aspects of the same issue for the dairy industry. It may be that moving *The People in Dairy* from the Farm Portfolio to the Industry People & Capability Portfolio would provide more organisational structure for this, and more connectedness to the Dairy Industry People Development Council.

Establishing delivery platforms segmented by community of practice or farming system (eg farms using overseas staff, or Automatic Milking Systems)

- Particular resources / delivery platforms will be appropriate for particular groups. This has already been explored with the Large Herds Business Retreats. A targeted approach to engagement and delivery is likely to be more effective, and the size and breadth of the program team could now support this. This will be dependent on being able to identify the appropriate segments to focus on, and methods to reach them.

Regional focus for delivery

- There are now enough advisers and farmers who are aligned with the program to be able to establish regional networks (local communities of practice). For example a recent meeting of advisers who had completed the Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy) and farmers who had participated in PeopleGPS in western Victoria had 25 people attend, to discuss plans for people-related activities in the region. Creating further opportunities for regional delivery with these networks is desirable.

Farmers acting together – networks of excellence

- The recent Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation-funded research into retention by the Rural Innovation Research Group has demonstrated the potential value of farmers acting together, for example, to create career paths for staff. *The People in Dairy* could provide a facilitating mechanism to increase this approach, also utilising the regional network approach.



Stephen and Sarah Crooke and Alice and Ian Holloway have co-operatively planned the future of their dairy businesses.

Advisers operating at multiple levels (and supported)

- In addition to technical experts who provide services in Industrial Relations advice, recruitment and processes of management, the program should develop mechanisms to train and support business coaches who specialize in Human Resource Management and who assist farm businesses to design and implement strategies effectively through a focus on effective management of people. This is the 'next click up' on the more generalist adviser role that the program has set as the foundation in the domain.
- Note: the premise that commercial arrangements between farmers and advisers is the path forward in this domain could be at odds with a possible direct service provision/ extension approach from Dairy Australia. It would be important to address this if Dairy Australia goes ahead with the direct service approach.

Resources more accessible with technological advances (e.g. apps, podcasts)

- It will be important to exploit new technology to provide resources with specialised, specific content and functionality.

Focus on specific topic areas – WH&S and Business transitions

- Both Workplace Health & Safety and Business transitions are large, pressing topic areas that affect farms. A focus on each of these areas would make sense. It is possible to build off the foundation of the current program in each area.

Regular farm survey of (currently missing) indicators and key case studies

- A dedicated study of indicators of people management on farms to collect and analyse:
 - *Beliefs and attitudes about employment*: How important are people to this business?
 - *Use of best practice Human Resource Management procedures*: Day to day what is done on this farm that shows people matter to this business?
 - *Working conditions offered*: What is it like for people to work in this business?
 - *Employee retention rate and fate*: How is the working relationship contributing to employer and employee outcomes?
 - *Demand for employees*: What are the needs of this business for skills and experience?
- The Dairy People Factfinder up-dated regularly (especially after each national census).

Potential for cross-sector efficiencies between Research and Development Corporations

- Given the degree of pressure on all RDCs by government to find efficiencies and to work across a broader R&D platform (Rural R&D Policy Statement), it will be important to explore opportunities to collaborate with other commodities. The people domain is likely to be a good candidate for this cross-sectorial RDC work.

What the future might look like

Drawing on research interviews with farmers, employees and farm consultants and our understanding of current and developing issues in *The People in Dairy* program, we imagine, that with continuing focus and investment in this area, by 2017 a hypothetical farm narrative might look like this ...

On Rhoda Farms Pty Ltd in 2017

“The last five years have been good for us. On the home farm we’ve moved to 800 cows and have three full time people with us now along with our relief milkers – with us for six years. We’ve bought another farm – leasing it out and – I know it is hard to believe – but we are nearly certain to be acquiring another farm in which our current manager will move to that business – it’s a step-up for him and he is excited about the next stage in his career. It is exciting for us too, given that in 2006 we nearly sold because we just couldn’t keep good staff.

Our neighbours reckon we are becoming the incubators for all the future dairy farmers in our community – this isn’t too far wrong – and next week we are getting together with them to form a dairy careers hub so our employees and new ones can get experience on different farms and provide new ideas into each of our farms.

At the last virtual discussion group on “people” we focused on how all our businesses around Australia are constructing flexible work arrangements for everyone on the farm. I did think afterwards that 10 years ago we’d have been talking about who was paying the least for their relief milkers.

Things are coming together a bit for us now – all our employee induction and training is on-line. We have YouTube videos of key tasks on our farm that we’ve put together “live” from our quad bike camera for the new manager running the new farm. Some things haven’t changed – with two changes of government and a large number of tweaks to IR law thank goodness for the “My Dairy Workforce” App that Dairy Australia produced back in 2013 and still maintain so that we have everything at our finger-tips for being on-top of changes.

We even won an award recently from our local regional development body for the way we have provided opportunities for employment of 2 older workers on the farm. This is an interesting story because our

staff member Ron began with us through the Dairy Australia workforce initiative – and he signed up for it as a 60-year-old retired labourer who had been unemployed for three years but had amazing skills and work ethic – he loves the social media stuff and picks up new things like a 20 year old.

Our profit and productivity has been going up as we've simplified our systems and kept our people – it has given us the time to work on the business not just in it. Our expansion was partly due to the next door block coming onto the market – but also our confidence in being able to attract and retain the people we need to have not only our business run well but know we can step away from it and know the farm is in good hands.

We still value the input from our adviser on our people management – in the beginning we relied heavily on her for all of the compliance – but now it is more about coaching us to be better and better employers. We heard that she'd recently completed an advanced HR dairy course and farm business leadership through the NCDEA and in partnership with the Australian Institute of Management.

More and more farmers around us are really switched on about people management now. Some reckon it was because of the public outrage over the Five Corners TV show that revealed the really poor working conditions for the large influx of migrants onto dairy farms in 2013 when the government opened up the visa schemes. From our point of view the change was afoot a lot earlier than that – our journey began in 2006 when we realised that we couldn't be sustainable unless we had the people part of our business right just as much as the business and environmental side. It took us six years and some help from our switched-on adviser to realise that was the issue in our business – the way we were running our farm wasn't a good fit for us – or our employees and ultimately it was costing our profits. Turning our business around turned us around too – we've never had so much fun in farming in 30 years.

Written by Ruth Nettle, a core group member of [The People in Dairy](#)

Fact files:

An overview of project outputs, 2006-2012



This section describes the range of activities delivered by the program between 2006 and 2012 as twenty-two Fact Files presented in alphabetical order.

<i>The People in Dairy area</i>	Fact File	Primary audience	Page
Farm	Accountant Seminars	Advisers	34
Farm	Adviser Forums	Advisers	35-36
Farm	Adviser Insights	Advisers	37
Workforce	Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways	Industry	38-39
Farm	Communication Strategy	Farmers & Advisers	40-41
Workforce	Cows Create Careers	Regional communities	42-43
Leadership	DairySage	Farmers & Advisers	44
Workforce	Dairy People Factfinder	Industry policy makers	45
Farm	Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)	Advisers	46-47
Workforce	In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands	Prospective employees, Farmers, Regional communities	48-50
Farm	Integration with other dairy programs	Farmers & Advisers	51-52
Farm	Large Herds Business Retreat	Farmers	53-54
Leadership	Leadership Blueprint	Industry organizations	55-56
Farm	Online Resources	Farmers & Advisers	57-58
Farm	PeopleGPS	Farmers	59-60
Farm	People Matters	Farmers & Advisers	61-62
Workforce	Policy Input	Industry policy makers	63
Workforce	Regional Planning	Dairy Australia's Regional Development Programs	64-65
Workforce	Retention Research	Dairy industry programs	66-67
Farm	Valuing People in Dairy Business Success	Dairy industry programs, farmers, advisers	68
Workforce	Workforce Planning & Action	Dairy industry programs	69
Leadership	Young Dairyfarmer Network Hub	Farmers	70

Accountant Seminars

The **Dairy farming Industrial Relations update for Accountants** is a one day seminar held for accountants, book-keepers and tax advisers.

Context

Accountants, book-keepers and tax advisers in dairy regions are key sources of advice on what dairy farm businesses need to do to comply with financial and Industrial Relations laws.

Informing this group of advisers and keeping them up-to-date with the changing legal requirements – through these seminars and through familiarisation with *The People in Dairy Online resources* – means that farmers are more likely to hear clear, consistent messages around compliance. Farm businesses that are complying with Industrial Relations legislation and the Pastoral Award have a lower business risk around their people resource.

About the updates

The seminar discusses:

- The Pastoral Award: Transitional arrangements, Pay scales and definitions, Penalty rates, Casual versus permanent, Part-time versus full-time, Recording of hours, Leave entitlements, Termination and entitlements
- Engaging people on dairy farms
- Individual Flexibility Agreements

- Contracts of employment
- Position descriptions
- Share farming and contract law
- An overview of the resources on *The People in Dairy* website

To “dairy-ise” the content, sessions are facilitated by a local dairy consultant and an Industrial Relations lawyer with experience in this sector.

Seminars are run by *The People in Dairy* at no charge to participants.

Outcomes

A new, important population of advisers is being engaged. The participants of the seminars were very positive about the experience and many subscribed receive ongoing information on the online resources.

Program learning

The financial sector contact a very broad range of dairy businesses (nearly all farmers have some interaction with an accountant) and sometimes provide relatively uninformed advice in areas of industrial relations. Engagement with them is likely to be very beneficial.

The future

Two sessions are scheduled for Gippsland during 2013 and further updates will roll out to other regions.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms comply with legal requirements & have a low business risk around their people resource
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers have a ready source of high quality advice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers

“The realisation of consequences for not following the IR or HR requirements is a good way to discuss the value of having these in place with clients.”

- Accountant at workshop in Echuca 2012

Response to the first accountant seminars was very positive

Year	Region	Workshops	Participants	Score*
2012	Western Victoria	2	39	n/a
2012	Northern Victoria	2	17	4.5 (range 4-5)

* “How confident are you that you can enhance your services to dairy farmer clients as a result of today’s session?”

Adviser Forums

Each year since 2009 *The People in Dairy* has held an **Adviser Forum** to support ongoing development and engagement of advisers with a special interest in this domain and to help them build a community of practice.

Context

When faced with new or complex management issues, farmers often turn to skilled and competent advisers for problem-solving and support.

In 2006 few dairy advisers had the confidence or capacity to support farmers on people issues. This gave rise to the Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy) in 2007.

By the end of 2012 almost 100 dairy industry people had graduated from the Diploma. The Adviser Forum supports this new community to stay up-to-date (especially in Industrial Relations changes) and share experiences and information to help them put their learning into practice on the farm or at an industry level.

About the forums

Adviser Forums have been held annually in Melbourne since 2009.

Typically 30-40 people attend and engage around an interactive workshop program that has a strong emphasis on feedback from ‘the field’ – with forum members sharing experiences and innovative approaches to tackling people management issues.

Advisers have the opportunity to contribute topics of interest to design of each forum. The annual themes have included:

- The value proposition of getting people right
- Pathways to dairy business ownership – the role of the adviser
- Hiring people from overseas
- Managing farm safety
- Talking through leases with clients, working for the win-win outcome
- Communicating change
- Driving a team culture
- Integrating Human Resource Management into advisory practice



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm businesses have the tools, processes and support to build the people resource capacity
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers have increased capacity to support farmers on people issues
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers have a ready source of high quality advice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers

A community of practice in this new area is building

Year	Participants	Benefit of Forum*
2009	27	n/a
2010	25	8
2011	31	8
2012	38	8 (range 7-10)
2013	40	8 (range 6-9)

* “What was the overall benefit from today's Forum?” rating 1 ‘none’ to 10 ‘extremely high’

The People in Dairy:
2006 to 2012 and beyond

“I have found the experience with TPID very positive and helpful to my business. I have found the network of people and the TPID programme absolutely invaluable. All private consultants in the industry should have the opportunity to get involved with TPID. I recommend the program and the Diploma course to anyone. Keep the good stuff going.”

– Farm consultant, NSW

Every year this is also complemented by an update in recent changes to Industrial Relations laws which is delivered by a lawyer who has worked with the program (Jennie Corkhill) to raise awareness of new developments and give advisers an opportunity to clarify their understanding.

Outcomes

The forums have been very well received. Feedback (and ongoing attendance) has consistently shown that advisers value the opportunity to network and maintain their engagement with *The People in Dairy*. At each forum there has been a number of advisers making the additional effort to attend from interstate.

Program learning

A key drawcard for advisers is accurate, timely information on changing industrial relations policies in particular- a topic difficult to keep up with without expert advice.

The forums provide an important opportunity for a dialogue between advisers and the *The People in Dairy* team- in particular, allowing the team to hear what is happening for advisers in the field.

The future

Further opportunities to meet regionally could also be considered, following a successful dinner meeting with local advisers in Western Victoria in 2012.

Adviser Insights



The ways in which increased adviser capacity translates to change on farm is being explored in a series of **Adviser Insights**. This research is being conducted by The Rural Innovation Research Group at the University of Melbourne for *The People in Dairy*.

Context

The People in Dairy program is built on the premise that increasing the capacity of advisers to support farmers on people issues is one of the necessary elements for improving what happens on farm.

However access to good information does not automatically translate to the offering of services with a people focus or better practices on farm.

Developing an understanding of what is involved, in both advisory businesses and farm businesses, will help inform the community of practice in this domain and the design and delivery of future projects.

About the research

The objective of this research is to develop a better understanding of the catalysts and impediments to implementing changes around the people resource on farm.

In-depth interviews are being conducted with several advisers and farmers who have had some connection with the program to explore:

- The changes in confidence, knowledge and practice of advisers who have completed the Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)

- The issues and challenges faced by advisers in taking on the principles of a people approach and being part of a cultural change about people
- The reach of advisers in contributing to change on farm

The study started in 2012 and involves Diploma graduates from a four different regions and in different roles, such as farm consultants and dairy company field staff. Farmers were chosen because they had done the PeopleGPS; had at least two interactions with an adviser skilled in the people area; or had been to the Large Herds Business Retreat.

Outcomes

The research is currently underway. Preliminary insights have been captured in several of the 'Narratives of Change' (e.g. 'Signposting on Succession', 'Growing the Advisory Business', and Developing New Advisory Skills') and an international symposium paper.

Program learning

This social science research requires a long timeframe and multiple engagements with advisers and farmers to track changes in confidence and behaviour. It goes to the heart of culture change – how people within the industry 'see' the people they employ and work with.

The future

Findings from this research will be available for future program design decisions.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm businesses have the tools, processes and support to build the people resource capacity
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers have increased capacity to support farmers on people issues
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers have a ready source of high quality advice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers

"I think business-wise... it just opens us another section of your consultancy business, so I mean you might have a financial component or a pastures component, nutrition component and if you can have an HR component, it all fits - build on your repertoire I suppose."

– Farm consultant, Victoria

Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways

The Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways project has been developed to increase investment in dairy in the region, and to strengthen the economic, social and environmental health of the valleys.

The project is coordinated through North East Murray Dairy with the support of local shires. It has a local steering committee with membership including dairy farmers, local government representatives, DPIV, Murray Goulburn Cooperative and Dairy Australia. The research component is supported by the University of Melbourne. *The People in Dairy* provided start-up support for the project (facilitation of design workshops and support for the field research) and developed new business transition tools.

Context

The agricultural trend in the Alpine Valleys of North East Victoria has been away from dairying and towards beef farming. Because dairying creates more jobs for small local communities than traditional grazing activity, this change has affected employment in the region, leading to declining valley populations and a reduction in government and non-government services to both farmers and local residents.

About the project

Tackling barriers to growth for dairy in the valleys requires a multi-level approach. In 2013, the stakeholders are undertaking a major project addressing this challenge.

As well as dealing with the issues of farmer access to high quality advice and support services, retention, and local community engagement, this project involves developing models that will facilitate successful dairy business transitions for both new and existing dairy farmers. This includes:

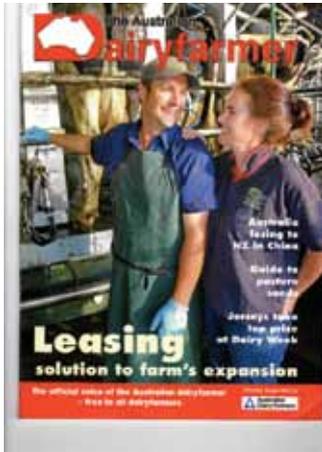
- Improving understanding of how to build equity for new entrants
- Developing tools for the best contemporary models for share, lease and employment agreements
- Developing new models for business transition management, including improved access to competent professional advice and support

Outcomes

The main work to date on this project has involved engaging stakeholders, the formation of working groups and research with focus groups of farmers. *The People in Dairy* has developed and new tools to support leasing agreements.

Program learning

Collaboration with Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways (a separate project with its own timelines and stakeholder needs) has been both to assist that project and also explore issues that can be scaled up to other regions. The topic of leasing was chosen as immediately relevant across the industry.



The future

The future of the AVDP project will depend on the project team being able to secure resources from the investors. The materials already developed will continue to be available via *The People in Dairy* website.

See the *Australian Dairyfarmer* March/April 2012 for a case study of Ian and Alice Holloway's experience of leasing a property to run a much bigger dairy operation than they would have been able to if they'd bought the land.

Home
FAQs
Subscribe
Contact

Search





Planning for the Future

Live Library Home
What's New
Real Stories
Resources
Module List

Home > The People in Dairy > Live Library > Planning for the Future > Leasing

Leasing a dairy property

On this page

- [Dairy career paths and farm ownership](#)
- [Risk control and reward](#)
- [Dairying under a leasing arrangement \(being a Lessee\)](#)
- [Landowners leasing their dairy property \(being a Lessor\)](#)
- [Ingredients of a successful leasing arrangement](#)
- [Lease arrangements and rental rates](#)
- [Variations of lease arrangements](#)
- [Setting up a leasing arrangement](#)
- [Leases legal requirements](#)
- [Renewal and renegotiation of the agreement](#)

Leasing of farms has occurred for many years in the dairy industry. With the ability to buy and sell farms becoming increasingly difficult, leasing may offer both Lessor and Lessee the opportunity to achieve their long term goals.

When people lease a dairy property they operate a dairy business by renting the land while owning the cows and mobile plant and equipment.

When landowners lease their property they are providing their land and fixed plant (capital assets) to another person (Lessee) to operate a dairy business in return for an agreed amount per year. This then means that the landowner (Lessor) has minimal (if any) control of the dairy business or its activities but may set some terms and conditions about how the asset can be used. The precise details of the agreement will vary to suit both parties but this is the overall concept of leasing.

Leasing may be an option for landowners who want to retire from active farming but are not ready to sell the property. In this situation, leasing frees up time and energy for other pursuits and generates an income without having to sell the property. It may also be an option for investors who are mainly interested in capital growth of the land and receiving a reasonable rental for the asset.

PHASES

- Starting out
- Growing
- Changing

IN THIS MODULE

- Introduction
- Creating an individual plan
- Getting help with planning
- Understanding change
- Business structures
- Leasing a farm
- Retirement income
- Estate planning

MODULE RESOURCES

- Resource library

 PeopleGROW

 FIND AN ADVISER

 LEAVE FEEDBACK

Communication Strategy

Each year *The People in Dairy* has developed a **Communication strategy** to support its extension, research and communication activities.

Context

The People in Dairy communication strategy aims to increase farmer and service provider awareness of the benefits and ways of making change on farm around people management. This is centred around describing case studies (farmers who have achieved success and how they have done it) and resources available to help.

Typically, most communications refer to the *Online resources* as these are the technical foundation of the program and the 'go to' place for detailed information.

About the strategy

Each year media-based output is structured around 6 themes coinciding with the bi-monthly issues of *The Australian Dairyfarmer* magazine. Each theme involves:

- Advance notice of the up-and-coming theme and its key messages to advisers via *People Matters*
- An article for the Australian Dairyfarmer magazine (prepared 2 months prior to publication)
- Two newsletter grabs for use by service providers in their own newsletters and communication activities

Since 2010 the distribution of newsletters grabs has been organised in consultation with the External

Communications Manager at Dairy Australia.

Outcomes

Farm stories in *The Australian Dairyfarmer* magazine and newsletter articles grabs have been sent to over 340 media and newsletter outlets each month.

The People in Dairy published an average of 26 articles per month in the rural and dairy media in the last five years (Media Monitors Report).

Program learning

As a change management program, *The People in Dairy* relies on the timely release of relevant information and key project messages to its target audiences. A high quality communication strategy is the vehicle by which the program maintains its profile and reputation.

The future

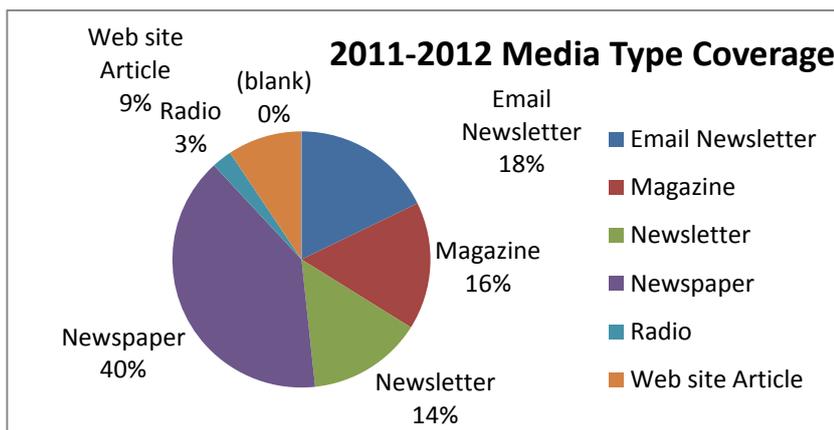
Responsibility for this program component was fully transitioned to Dairy Australia's communication team in 2012.

Year	Total number of articles	Average articles per month
2008	306	26
2009	279	23
2010	345	29
2011	287	24
2012	323	27
TOTAL	1540	26

TPID area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPID objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All farmers & advisers understand the benefits of farm business strategies having a people perspective
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers & Advisers

“The newsletter grabs have been one of the best elements of the program for me – it is so easy to get something good into each issue of the relevant newsletters”

- Industry consultant Gippsland



2011-2012 Mainstream media and dairy organisation publication venues

- AusdairyL
- Australian Dairyfarmer Magazine
- Australian Farm Journal
- Bairnsdale Advertiser
- Ballarat Courier
- Bega District News
- Border Watch
- Bunbury Herald
- Burnie Advocate
- Camden Haven Courier, Laurieton
- Central & North Burnett Times
- Cohuna Farmers Weekly
- Colac Herald
- Country News
- Dairy Australia RDP e-chat
- Dairy Bulletin
- Dairy Connect
- Dairy News Australia
- Dairy SA e-loop
- Dairy SA Newsletter
- dairyinfo.biz
- DairySA e-loop
- Devondaler
- Don Dorrigio Gazette
- Farmlink
- Gatton Lockyer Brisbane Valley Star
- Gippsland Farmer
- Great Southern Star
- hicoFarmer
- How Now Gippy Cow
- <http://peopleindairy>
- <http://theland.farmonline.com.au>
- <http://thepeopleindairy.org.au>
- <http://willungavets.com.au>
- <http://www.countrynews.com.au>
- <http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au>
- <http://www.dairyinfo.biz>
- <http://www.getfarming.com.au>
- <http://www.new.dpi.vic.gov.au>
- Kyabram Free Press
- Landmark
- Launceston Examiner
- Manning Great Lakes Extra
- Maryborough Advertiser
- Mid-Coast Observer
- Milking the Weather
- Murray Goulburn Field Services
- National Centre for Dairy Education
- Norco Bulletin
- Northern Dairyfarmer
- Pakenham Gazette
- Parmalat Milk News
- Penola Pennant
- Portland Observer
- QDO news
- Rural Weekly insert, Toowoomba
- Shepparton News
- Singleton Argus
- South Coast Register, Nowra
- South Gippsland Sentinel Times
- Southern Highland News, Bowral
- Stock Journal
- Tassie Dairy News
- The Dairy Bulletin
- The Land
- The Weekly Times
- Times Victor Harbor
- Warragul & Drouin Gazette
- Warrnambool Standard
- West Vic Dairy News (On the Land)
- Whitsunday Guardian

Cows Create Careers



Photo from The Australian Dairyfarmer

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workforce planning & action
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms attract and retain the people they need
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mentoring & leadership support by industry
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional communities

“Gets me out and about to see how others think - identify the drivers behind what makes a good person to enter the industry.”

- Dairy farmer involved with the project, 2011

Cows Creates Careers promotes career and educational opportunities in the dairy industry to secondary school students with the support of local dairy farmers and industry advocates.

Context

A sustainable dairy industry needs to be able to attract young people who want to build a career in dairy.

The primary long-term objective of the initiative is to increase the number of young people choosing vocational and professional careers in the dairy industry - across farm, service or manufacturing sectors.

The aims of Cows Create Careers are:

- To raise awareness of students, teachers and parents of the variety of careers in the dairy industry.
- To increase skills in communication and mentorship of participating dairy farmers and industry advocates.
- To build better industry understanding of when career decisions are made by students.
- To have more students enter a dairy career pathway.
- To have good news stories and positive media circulated about the dairy industry.

This initiative predates *The People in Dairy* program, having started with the Strzelecki Lions Club in 2004 then extending across Victoria with funding from the Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation in 2006.

It has been a national project since 2009 funded (50:50) by Dairy Australia and Regional Development Programs with significant support from commercial companies for program consumables.

About the project

This project provides secondary school students with the opportunity to learn about the industry whilst taking care of a couple of three-week old dairy calves for 6 weeks. Educational activities are structured around feeding and monitoring the calves as they grow.

Local dairy farmers and a local dairy industry professional (such as a veterinarian, dairy company field officer or agronomist) provide advice and support to the students.

Students learn about different aspects of the industry and career opportunities, and get to meet people working in the industry.

Outcomes

All regions are running Cows Create Careers. The program is well-known by rural schools throughout the nation, with the demand for the program currently outstripping its budget to deliver.

The Cows Create Careers team summarise the outcomes in their annual reports.

In short:

- Students, teachers and parents are more positive about the industry
- Almost half of dairy farmers and industry advocates become more involved in industry activities outside their normal work requirements
- More than 700 students have been interested in undertaking work experience

Program learning

In 2009 the program piloted the establishment of a work experience panel of farmers and advocate businesses who would be prepared to host later-year work experience students.

Then, following a 2011 survey of teachers participating in the program, a method of offering work experience in years 10 and 11 has been explored

to provide the 'stepping stones' needed for young people to move from the Cows Create Careers Farm Module experience (generally in years 8 or 9) to actual work on farms.

The future

A successful application to the Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation by Jaydee Events (who manage the project) is helping match students looking for work experience with a placement. This comes under the banner of **Cows Create Careers - Schools to Industry** and has funding to extend the project to schools in all Victorian regions by 2013.

Responsibility for this project component moved to Dairy Australia's 'Industry People and Capability' group in 2012.

The reach and reputation of Cows Create Careers continues to grow

Year	Districts	Schools	Students	Dairyfarmers	Industry advocates
2009	20	167	5,845	145	160
2010	20	176	6,389	154	152
2011	22	179	6,923	178	150



DairySage

DairySage is a capacity building initiative that aims to provide the Australian dairy industry with a sustainable framework to establish mentoring relationships.

It is for dairying people from all sectors of the industry, including the farm, manufacture and service sectors.

Context

Mentoring programs provide industry with the opportunity and mechanism for professional development.

The DairySage Mentoring program was developed by WestVic Dairy with funding provided by the Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation. *The People in Dairy* provided design and management support.

The program ran from 2007-2012.

About the mentoring process

Introductory 2-day training workshops were conducted to provide participants, both mentors and mentees, with the necessary skills to set up successful mentoring partnerships.

Mentors and mentees were matched to implement a personal development plan for the mentee, for a minimum duration of 6 months. Resources included professional development training in goal setting, communications skills, learning styles and dairy business development, as well as networking opportunities and a manual to support the mentoring relationship.

Outcomes

Over 11 workshops, 97 mentors and 100 mentees were trained and matched. An additional 59 people participated in a mentoring activity derived from DairySage but delivered through another project.

45% of the people participating in the program were from farm, 45% from the service sector, 7% from manufacturing and 3% from other industry roles.

DairySage mentoring has produced a wide range of experiences for both mentors and mentees, from business gains through to personal development. Participants have developed successful mentoring partnerships and addressed issues such as career plans, succession plans, growing the dairy business, plans for wealth creation, networking skills and developing practical farm skills.

Program learning

Establishing a mentoring initiative requires an organisation to champion it, appropriate participant training, high-quality matching processes, and ongoing support and coordination.

The future

While there is formally no further funding for this project, DairySage based activities will be incorporated into the mentoring of the Diploma of HR (Dairy) graduates, and other relevant programs.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leadership
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The industry has the future farmer leadership it needs
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry provides mentoring support
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry provides opportunities for future leaders to use skills
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers & Advisers

“For me, DairySage Mentoring confirmed that the dairy industry has some top young people in the industry, and if we look after them we will have good farm managers and leadership into the future.”

– Mentor 2009

Dairy People Factfinder

The **2011 Dairy People Factfinder** enables the Australian dairy industry to become more effective in policy-making and program design by providing the evidence base needed to fully consider the people dimension in planning and development.

Context

Having an understanding of the factors that influence workforce issues in regions (such as unemployment levels, demographics, regional wealth and the availability of training and services) helps inform discussions about issues and capacity.

Dairy Australia is starting to invest in regional workforce development. This requires identification of the driving forces behind regional workforce issues and subsequently, the capacity.

About the Factfinder

The Factfinder is a compilation of information about the demographics, roles, conditions, attitudes and options of the people who work on farms and in dairy manufacturing.

The data used in the report has come from many sources, primarily:

- ABS Census.
- ABARES.
- Dairy Australia's National Dairy Farmer Survey.

Longitudinal and time-series data are particularly valuable because of the insights they give into change over time. The analysis is provided at national, state and regional levels.

Outcomes

The Factfinder has been well received by the Dairy Industry People Development Council, the lead cross-organisational group in this domain.

A key indicator of the Factfinder's effectiveness is the way in which it has been used. To date, the Factfinder has been a resource for policy development, program designs and Workforce Planning and Action programs.

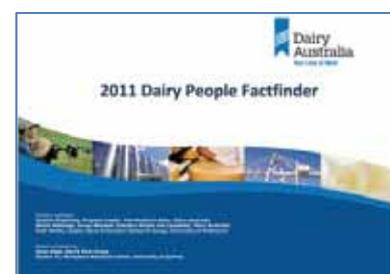
Program learning

The process of building the Factfinder highlighted many areas where data was scarce, and the need for regional versions of the document for those areas with active Workforce Planning groups.

The future

The Factfinder helps form a rich picture that the industry can build and refine over time with specific enquiry.

Responsibility for this project component moved to Dairy Australia's 'Industry People and Capability' group in 2012. An updated version of the Factfinder is being prepared for later in 2013, as well as regional reports to support the Workforce Planning and Action projects in south-western Victoria and Tasmania.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workforce planning & action
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Better workforce planning and more coordinated action
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has a feasible workforce planning process
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry policy-makers

“The Factfinder provides a significant amount of data with commentary and succinct analysis information across the different dairy sectors...”

...I have used it in submissions, discussions with government and other stakeholders.”

- Policy Manager, Australian Dairy Farmers



Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)



Graduates from the first Diploma in 2008

The **Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy)** has been developed to increase industry’s capacity to support the sustainability and growth of farm businesses through better management of the people resource.

Participants gain skills and qualification in identifying and managing people issues with a dairy-specific context and become part of a community of practice with others in this area.

Context

Service providers such as dairy company field officers and farm consultants are often early sounding boards for farmers. The objective of the Diploma is to give advisers the tools, processes and confidence to provide advice around people issues.

Graduates will play a key role in their regions to provide services and advice, or refer their clients to the relevant resource of expertise.

Those with considerable experience in farm system management may progress to provide a coaching role to farm businesses.

Trainers delivering the PeopleGPS course must have the Diploma.

About the diploma training

The Diploma is run by the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia and *The People in Dairy* program.

The Diploma has 8 units covered over 12 days, in 4 face-to-face workshops

each of 3 days duration. Participants are also required to complete activities within their workplace.

The workshops are delivered by local and international guest presenters, well experienced in dealing with people issues, and generally with considerable on-farm consulting experience.

Key elements of *The People in Dairy* for the ‘Farm’ area are covered:

- Recruitment
- Induction processes
- Farm system design
- Analysis of roles and responsibilities
- Policies and procedures
- Management of working conditions
- Leadership and workplace culture
- Remuneration and retention
- Training and development issues
- Work health and safety
- Performance management
- Separation/termination procedures
- Succession planning
- Employment law and Industrial Relations

Much of the course content is based on dairy industry case studies and *The People in Dairy* online resources (www.thepeopleindairy.org.au).

The enrolment cost to participants is currently approximately \$3,000.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers are effectively using people resources in their farm business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms comply with legal requirements & have a low business risk around their people resource
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers have increased capacity to support farmers on people issues
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers

Outcomes

119 people from all dairying regions in Australia and a wide range of disciplines have participated in the Diploma over 7 intakes:

- Dairy company staff (23%)
- Dairy consultants, including DPI staff (17%)
- Vets and clinic staff (8%)
- Farmers with large numbers of staff (18%)
- NCDEA and TAFE trainers (14%)
- Other service providers (20%)

Virtually all graduates have gone on to use these skills and knowledge in some form in their businesses (survey of Diploma participants 2012).

About one-third of graduates (including all the farm consultants) now routinely use the learning in interactions with their farming clients in a mix of problem-solving, coaching and establishing new systems. Graduates with an active role in providing advice to farmers have their contact details posted on www.thepeopleindairy.org.au.

The Diploma has given rise to a community of practice of well-

informed, enthusiastic advisers who continue to connect with *The People in Dairy* through an annual *Adviser Forum*.

Over 20 Diploma graduates have delivered farmer training and presentations for the program. This is a significant increase in industry-level capacity.

Program learning

The program has been continually reviewed and has consequently advanced in its delivery style, content and relevance to the dairy industry.

Completion rate has been high. 12% of enrolments (half of them farmers) have completed the course but did not submit materials for assessment.

The future

The Diploma is being run again in 2013 due to ongoing demand.

Ways of offering an advanced diploma or masters in Human Resource Management could be explored to enable some individuals to specialise further in this area.

“The Diploma has allowed me to broaden my knowledge on HRM areas and I have developed my skill set further to make recommendations to my clients to ensure even further gains in their dairy farm productivity and profitability.”

– Dairy farm consultant, Tasmania

Diploma participants 2008-2013

Year	Enrolled	Graduated
2008	5	5
2009	17	16
2010	35*	26
2011	21	18
2012	22	18
2013	19	Not yet completed
Total	119	83

**Three participants completed the following year*



In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands

In2Dairy for Assistant Farmhands is a pilot program in Western Victoria designed to establish an effective pathway into dairy farming at the assistant farmhand level.

Context

The In2Dairy pilot in Western Victoria is a full run through the whole concept of *Workforce Planning and Action* (see Fact File).

It is a collaborative project between:

- WestVic Dairy
- WestVic Staffing Solutions
- National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA)
- The regional Job Services Australia network

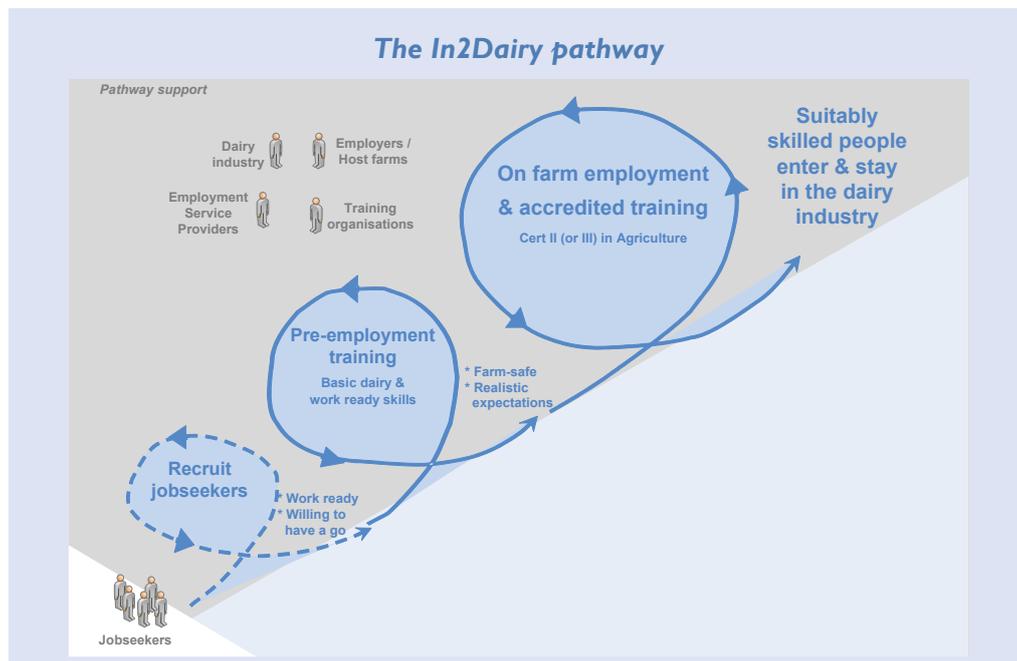
The People in Dairy, the Rural Innovation Research Group and the Brotherhood of St Laurence provided guidance and evaluation to the project team.

The pilot will be regarded as successful if:

- New people enter the dairy industry, all who have been through a traineeship with NCDEA
- Local farmers recommend this pathway for employment of assistant farmhands and recommend it to others
- Participating organisations are enthusiastic about the program and able to repeat the process

The Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, and the Helen McPherson Trust Fund contributed \$220,000 to the first pilot.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workforce planning & action
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms attract and retain the people they need
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Suitably skilled people are available and eager to work in the industry
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prospective employees, Farmers, Regional communities



About the pilot

The pathway is based on the premise that successful long-term employment relationships are more likely in dairy if employees new to the industry are provided with pre-employment training and support, and if farmers new to the business of being employers have the chance to develop their own skills.

The employment pathway involves:

- Use of the Job Services Australia network, career and community programs to identify job seekers who may be interested in a career in dairy
- Use of the industry network through WestVic Dairy to identify farms that may take on trainees
- Job seeker participation in 10-days of pre-employment training with the NCDEA
- A decision by participants to opt-in or opt-out of the program
- Enrolment in a traineeship with individual dairy farms or through a Group Training Organisation
- On-going support by WestVic Staffing Solutions for both trainees and farmers to assist the early employment relationship

Outcomes

The project was established in 2010 with a local leader appointed (WestVic Dairy's Robyn Vale), all the stakeholder relationships initiated, the pre-employment course designed and the full process undertaken with 56 potential employees enrolled. Of the 56 enrolments, 42 completed the pre-employment training. Twenty-six were placed in employment and 11 completed their traineeships, with four enrolled in Cert III and three enrolled in Cert IV in 2012. An important outcome is that the

'filtering' of interest and ability to fill the assistant farmhand role was achieved in a pre-employment environment (prior to employees starting work on farms).

The connectedness and visibility of the dairy industry with the employment sector has increased significantly through this project.

A second round in 2012 has had 30 enrolments, with the outcomes still to be determined.

In2Dairy 2010 Initial Pilot	
Progression	Participants
Enrolment	56
Completion of pre-employment course	42
Placements	26*

*Figure includes three additional participants who were registered after the conclusion of the final pre-employment intake, and placed into traineeships.

Program learning

The pilot project focussed strongly on the pre-employment training of the employees, but as employment relationships rolled out it was clear that there needed to be more support and training for the farmers in their role as employers. An option of participation in a PeopleGPS course, or some one-on-one coaching in people management by a local consultant who had completed the Diploma HRM (Dairy) was planned for participating farmers in the second round.

The first round of this project had two drivers – enhancement of employment on dairy farms, and support for disadvantaged job-seekers (the prime interest of Victorian government and Brotherhood of St Laurence as stakeholders). These led to strong engagement and responses, both positive and negative, with farmers reinforcing the importance of ‘giving people a go’, and also responding with comments such as ‘the dairy industry shouldn’t be looking to employ ‘no-hopers’’. Juggling the world view of all players is an important factor in implementation of this type of project.

The role of The People in Dairy was to learn from the pilot to efficiently & effectively repeat the pathway - in the same and in other regions. This assessment is underway.

The future

The second round of the project is currently happening in Western Victoria. It appears that demand for assistant farmhands may be reduced because farms are accessing ‘backpackers’ under new visa arrangements that allow tourists to remain in Australia for longer if they work in regional industries. It is likely that this will decrease the current engagement with the project, although the longer-term benefits may still be a driver.

Responsibility for this project component moved to Dairy Australia’s ‘Industry People and Capability’ group in 2012.

Integration with other dairy programs

The People in Dairy aims to help other dairy projects overcome people constraints to adoption by assisting them to understand and integrate *The People in Dairy* principles into their technical recommendations.

Context

Dairy industry RD&E programs may increase practice change on farm and farmer satisfaction with the relevance of the investment by taking the people implications around adoption of their technology into account.

About this activity

As well as introducing the leaders of other dairy projects to the program and its resources, *The People in Dairy* has collaborated with some to help to imbue a people approach into their technical programs.

The contribution of *The People in Dairy* to other programs has included:

- Prompting consideration around the people issues as part of the Cool Cows strategy
- Embedding people principles in InCalf's information and training for Transition Cow Management
- Co-delivering a series of adviser workshops with Countdown to promote people considerations

Outcomes

See a series of outcome snapshots on the following page.

Program learning

Being aware of the people component in all of the complex technical activities that need to be done on farm can increase their chance of success.



The future

People principles will continue to be incorporated into dairy programs run by Dairy Australia's Farm portfolio.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other dairy programs integrate people elements into their technical recommendations
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers & Advisers

Cool Cows

What the collaboration involved: Working with the Cool Cows program leader several times over the period of 12 months

The difference this made: It identified some new areas of development to improve implementation on farm

The issue on farm: Cooling infrastructure in place on medium to large farms which employ several staff is often not fully utilised. Not everyone in the farm team is sure when to activate or how to organize 'hot weather strategies' (eg milking at different times of the day)

Outputs: A Hot Season Planner for the dairy that highlights forecast conditions, allowing the farm manager to assess the level of risk and provide appropriate guidance to the farm team. A companion short guide has also been developed to help farmers plan and implement strategies with their farm team.

The future: Incorporate the new materials into the Cool Cows website



The People in Dairy | Countdown Workshops 2012

What the collaboration involved: Design and delivery of a 4 hour Countdown Advisers Workshop about engaging the farm team on udder health issues to improve mastitis control while creating a better work environment.

Region	Workshops	Participants	Score*
Gippsland	1	23	3.9
Northern Victoria	2	35	4.1
Western Victoria	2	34	4.2
NSW	1	13	4.3
Queensland	1	32	4.1
Tasmania	1	16	4.2
WA	1	11	4.3
TOTAL	9	164	4.2

*The usefulness of the workshop to your business-1 = very poor, 5 = excellent

InCalf's 'Checklist for Transition Cow Management'

What the collaboration involved: Working with InCalf program team several times over 12 months during the design and delivery of the Transition Cow Management module.

The difference this made: It highlighted the role of people in managing the transition period on farm.

The issue on farm: Cows that don't transition well from springer to fresh milker lose more body weight, have lower milk production and are less fertile. Getting nutrition right in the three weeks leading up to calving gets more cows in calf, sooner, as well as reducing health problems.

Outputs: The 'Checklist of Transition Cow Management' provides farmers with both a technical summary of this task on farm, as well as highlighting the people management tools that can help make it a success.

The future: Continued use of the resources by the Feedbase and Fertility projects of Dairy Australia.

Large Herds Business Retreat

The People in Dairy Large Herds Business Retreat is a 1.5-day workshop that gives owners and managers an opportunity to review their farm business strategies from a 'people' perspective in a group setting.

Context

Large herds (800+ cows) make a significant contribution to the national milk supply.

They have some special challenges in implementing large scale operations using a team of people, many of whom are not family members.

Reviewing the business strategy with a people perspective increases the likelihood of successful implementation of all planned activities. Well-managed businesses are able to sustain and grow.

About the retreat

The retreat is designed for dairy businesses with at least two full-time (or equivalent) employees who are not family members.

The 1.5-day workshop involves owners and managers from typically 4-6 large herds. It aims to help them articulate their business vision and manage the farm's people resource to progress toward this vision. In contrast to the *PeopleGPS*, much of the focus is around making decisions at the top levels of *The People in Dairy Navigator*.

Five topics are discussed:

- Business strategies and people economics for each farm and industry-wide
- Analysis of farm systems and the people effort required in farm operations
- Performance management programs on each farm
- Business culture and its impacts
- Re-design of the business strategy with a people focus.

Having small, highly interactive groups results in rich discussion around the circumstances of the individual businesses.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers are effectively using people resources in their farm business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms attract and retain the people they need
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms comply with legal requirements & have a low business risk around their people resource
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers

Dairy businesses producing over 300M litres have participated in Large Herds Business Retreats

Year	Region	Retreats	Businesses
2010	National (Melbourne)	2	7
2010	WA	1	4
2011	NSW	2	11
2012	Queensland	1	8
2013	WA	1	7
	TOTAL	7	37

It is imperative to have both owners and operators for each business attend the retreat in order to identify many of the issues. There is no limit on numbers attending from each business and the inclusion of key decision makers or advisers is welcomed.

The facilitators are experienced consultants who have completed the Diploma Human Resource Management (Dairy). One member of the Core Group (Chris Hibburt) has facilitated all these events with the support of a senior consultant from the region.

There is no fee for the retreat but attendees must pay for their own travel and accommodation.

Outcomes

Thirty-seven farm businesses representing over 300 ML milk supply have participated in the retreats, with very high satisfaction levels.

Much of the value for participants comes through discussing issues with their peers and making connections with service providers trained and experienced in this domain. Six consultants have been facilitators at the workshops.

Program learning

It has been a significant effort to enrol sufficient participants for each retreat – it is hard for multiple senior people to commit to being away from their businesses.

Attendance at the retreats is only the first step to change. Businesses that engage ongoing support from consultants with specialist skills in this area (such as Diploma of Human Resource Management graduates) typically maintain momentum toward

the planned changes following the workshop, but this tends to be only a few.

Mechanisms to promote follow-up are necessary.

A holistic business focus is needed to achieve dairy business success (bringing the people, financial and physical elements of the business together in a strong business strategy).

The future

A move away from badging as 'large herds' has been encouraged by Dairy Australia, and further workshops in 2013 will be more generally promoted.

A shift towards integration of 'people' focus with more 'business management' should also become a priority when delivering these workshops in the future.

Chris Brander manages a 210 ha property which includes an A1 milk herd of 150 milkers and an A2 herd of 400 milkers in northern NSW. He has five full time staff and two casuals. In November 2012 Chris attended a Business Retreat, run by Dairy Australia's *The People in Dairy* program.

"Before I left I spent a lot of time writing out lists of what needed to be done while I was away and instructions on how to do those tasks".

"When I got to the retreat the message that stood out to me was that the smooth operations of the farm should not rely on the presence of the manager. It got me thinking that we could do things differently on that front. It was perfect timing for me to re-think how involved I needed to be in supervising every day activities and routine decisions"

"The Business Retreat was a great opportunity to share experiences and ideas with other farmers with similar scales of operation. It was a really good place to hear how other people deal with those issues. The seminar presentations were very interesting but I also got a lot out of talking to fellow farmers over a beer in the evening"

"Brilliant couple of days. I've learnt more about our business than I knew before. We have a good base to improve from."

– Dairy farmer, WA

Leadership Blueprint

A number of stakeholders already invest in building leadership capacity. An industry-wide plan would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of this investment.

Context

The Australian dairy industry recognises that good leadership is critical to the future success of the industry.

Leadership capacity is needed to influence public policy and manage the industry's collective investments across the value chain.

About the blueprint

The objectives of *The People in Dairy* were to broker broad agreement to a leadership blueprint and table it for others in the industry to take further.

The stakeholder groups active in its development were the:

- Australian Dairy Farmers
- Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation
- Dairy Australia
- Regional Development Programs
- Department Primary Industries Victoria
- National Centre for Dairy Education Australia

The steps taken to reach a framework for leadership development included:

- Doing a literature review
- Drafting an industry blueprint and putting it up for discussion
- Compiling a directory of leadership initiatives
- Creating a template to help support policy development

Outcomes

The People in Dairy worked with the Australian Dairy Farmers to create a three-tiered leadership strategy (district/regional, state/national and international). This approach was discussed with and gained agreement from the stakeholder groups.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council launched the 'Dairy Leadership Industry Blueprint 2010-2015' at their annual breakfast in November 2010.

Program learning

It is estimated that there are approximately 200 leadership roles across the industry and 40 new people needed for these roles each year.

To achieve this capacity more than 80 people must have the opportunity to build their skills in leadership each year.

The opportunities to build skills should be presented in a number of formats (for example as courses or tours) and may be run by dairy or by other industries or community groups.

It is also important that people who undertake leadership development training are provided with on-going support such as mentoring, and opportunities to fulfil real roles. To achieve this, industry organisations need policies in place to ensure that emerging leaders can participate.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leadership
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The industry has the future farmer leadership it needs
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry provides opportunities for future leaders to use skills
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry organisations

“The ADIC’s Dairy Leadership- An Industry Blueprint 2010-2015 underpins the industry’s expectations for investing in leadership development.”

– Rob Patrick, Farming Minds

The future

Examples of how the blueprint will be implemented within industry are already starting to emerge.

The blueprint has formed the basis of the Dairy Moving Forward Leadership strategy and the Community of Interest around it.

A 'Developing Dairy Leaders Program' has been developed as the industry's flagship tier two leadership initiative for people who wish to further develop their capability and capacity within or towards a state leadership role. It is managed by Dairy Australia

and Australian Dairy Farmers and delivered by the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia.

The Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation is funding a 'Daring to Change Leadership Program' which is designed to build a strong and influential network of dairy leaders at the National (Tier 3) level.

Responsibility for this project component moved to Dairy Australia's 'Industry People and Capability' group in 2012.

Online Resources

www.thepeopleindairy.org.au is the core resource for *The People in Dairy* program. It forms the basis of the program updates and training - including the *PeopleGPS*, Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy) as well as all National Centre of Dairy Education Australia courses with a people component.

The website contains the conceptual framework, technical information, templates and tools for farmers, service providers and industry stakeholders with an interest in this domain.

Context

Having clear, consistent information is fundamental to supporting any change management program on farm.

The reasons for choosing to have the resources web-based were:

- It is accessible by dairy farmers and service providers across Australia
- It allows up-to-date, regionally-specific information to be provided; this is especially important for changes in legislated areas such as Industrial Relations laws and Work Health & Safety
- The tools and templates provided enable users to customise outputs to their own circumstances

Designed and populated by an expert panel with input from five focus groups of farmers, the online resources were launched in May 2008.

About the online resource

Information on the website is organised around seven key theme areas:

- A people approach
- Farm policies and systems
- Recruitment
- Engagement and reward
- Individual performance
- Working together
- Planning for the future

Users can (and do) access the information and download the templates and tools such as the Generator to construct position descriptions, standard operating procedures and safety protocols.

The website also has:

- A comprehensive search facility.
- A subscription service where visitors can elect to subscribe to a regular email bulletin (*People Matters*) about new content on the site.
- The facility for online enquiry or comment about content.
- A secure forum that is hosted by the program – where Diploma graduates and candidates can raise issues for discussion or pose questions to *The People in Dairy* expert panel.

Outcomes

The site won an international design award (WebAward: Non-profit category) for 'innovation, content, copywriting and ease-of-use' when it was launched in 2008.

As the program has rolled out, the website content has been expanded and edited, including new modules on planning for the future, leasing and



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers have clear, consistent information and resources about people management
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers & Advisers

“Wow, what a fabulous informative site. Page after page of information that is positive for all parties involved.”

- Website feedback from a farm assistant

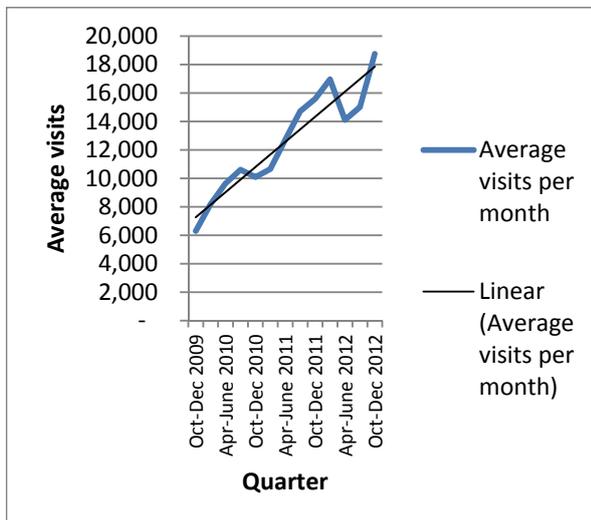
share-farming resources, and some useful web apps to aid searching and navigation.

The currency of the online resources have been maintained through multiple changes in Australia's industrial relations laws.

Website usage is regularly summarised in reports to Dairy Australia. In short:

- The website has grown to 210 web pages and has over 310 downloadable resources and a number of interactive tools.
- Visits to the site have risen steadily since its launch, to a high of an average of 4,500 visits per week by December 2012.
- Downloads of online resources have also grown steadily, with a total of 63,000 recorded in 2012.
- The Engagement and Reward module has been particularly popular.

Several organisations, including the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia, the VFF and various dairy companies, now refer their website *The People in Dairy* for information in the people domain.



'The People in Dairy website is the best I've seen for accessing information to help employers work through all aspects of employing staff. In the past we faced real challenges....but the People in Dairy brings it all together.'

'I've had people ask me how we did things, but now I tell them to go to the website, work through the various topics and download the templates which they can customise to fit their farming operations.'

'If they work through the People in Dairy website, they can be confident they'll have everything covered.'

-Farmer from Western Victoria.

Program learning

The website is continually updated to provide farmers with accurate information and resources. This responsiveness has been critical during periods of significant change such as the overhaul of industrial relations laws including the demise of WorkChoices, advent of the Fair Work Act, referral of powers by states to the Federal government, the Pastoral Award modernisation process and OH&S legislation changes.

The external review of *The People in Dairy* in 2012 found that the website is the resource most used by respondents, with 88% accessing it for information and 77% using it for templates and tools. It was rated as highly valuable for assisting farmers and advisers in staff recruitment, management and retention, and other people issues.

The future

After five years, the site would now benefit from a refresh of its architecture. Maintaining a dedicated online resource is essential for the continuity of on-farm change promoted by this program.

PeopleGPS

PeopleGPS is the four day short course to assist dairy farmers with recruiting, retaining and developing people on their farm.

Context

People issues on dairy farms play a critical role in determining whether farmers get to where they want to be in the industry - whether it is running an operation that attracts and retains the right people, achieving a better work/life balance or being capable of continued business growth.

PeopleGPS was developed in collaboration with the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia, and maps to the Level V unit *RTE5807A Manage Staff*.

It was designed based on experiences of farmers in 11 People Focus Discussion Groups run in 2007-08.

About the course

The course is run by NCDEA (and alliance partners) over four days. Trainers all have completed the Diploma Human Resource Management (Dairy).

The enrolment cost to participants has been subsidised by industry to be approximately \$300.

The course focuses on a case study farm to explore issues around:

- Recruitment
- Safety procedures and protocols
- Compliance with Industrial Relations laws and awards
- Performance appraisals
- Termination of employees
- Working with other people
- Planning for the future

Farmers attending the course practise using the online resources to create a set of employment documents and action plan for their farm.

Outcomes

Over 200 farmers have participated so far in *PeopleGPS* and the precursor People Focus Discussion Groups.

Feedback on the course has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants indicating that the skills learned on the course will directly assist their current and future roles (see overpage).

Participants get most value from the online resources and discussions of other people's experiences. By the end of the course many farmers intend to:

- Use the online resources to develop standard operating procedures and safety protocols.
- Write a code of conduct and employment contracts.
- Help improve the working relationships of the farm team, deal with conflicts and conduct performance appraisals.

Program learning

Experience with the People Focus Discussion Groups highlighted the need for 'learning by doing' with the opportunity to discuss issues with other farmers.

The discussion groups also showed how difficult it is for (even highly experienced) farm consultants to facilitate sessions on people management without having training and support - especially around Industrial Relations.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers are effectively using people resources in their farm business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms attract and retain the people they need
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farms comply with legal requirements & have a low business risk around their people resource
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farmers

“Very good- well worth attending as it opens your eyes to everything that is involved in employing someone.”

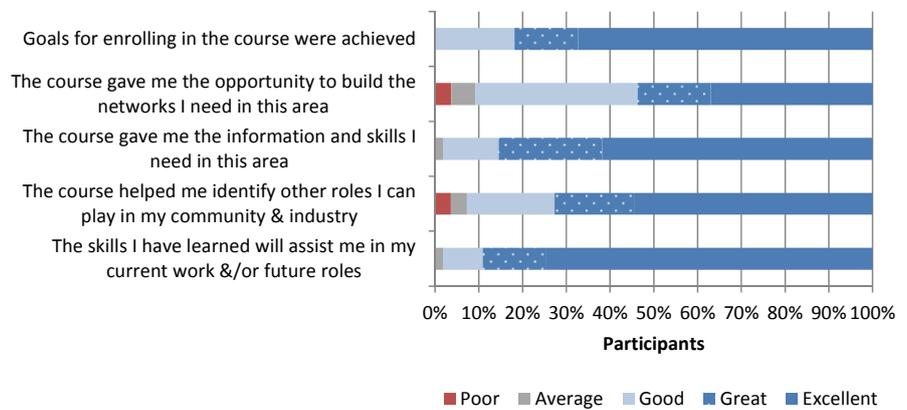
-Farmer participant at the *PeopleGPS* Warragul, 2011

PeopleGPS from 2010-2012

Region	Workshops	Participants	Score*
Gippsland	2	19	5.4
Northern Victoria	5	40	5.7
Western Victoria	5	38	5.7
NSW	1	11	5.4
QLD	1	n/a	n/a
SA	1	17	5.7
Tasmania	1	9	6.0
TOTAL	15	133	5.7

**The skills I've learned will assist me in my current work role and/or future roles: score between 1 (unacceptable) to 6 (excellent).*

Feedback to NCDEA evaluation from 56 participants



People Matters

The monthly newsletter **People Matters** was created to provide farmers, advisers and stakeholders with brief updates on people issues of interest to dairy farming, and notifications of new website content and planned events.

Context

A regular email newsletter is an easy way of alerting people who have had some contact with *The People in Dairy* to new information and directs subscribers to online resources around current issues.

The primary audience for the newsletter is:

- *The People in Dairy* website subscribers
- Diploma of Human Resource Management (Dairy) graduates and students
- Advisers who have been to awareness sessions and workshops

- Farmers who have participated in *The People in Dairy* training (People GPS or People Focus Discussion Groups)
- Key dairy industry people

About the newsletter

The email newsletter is a simple design in HTML format (and a plain text version for people unable to read HTML format).

The emails are personalised, and the sender identified as *The People in Dairy* with Dairy Australia’s logo in the header.

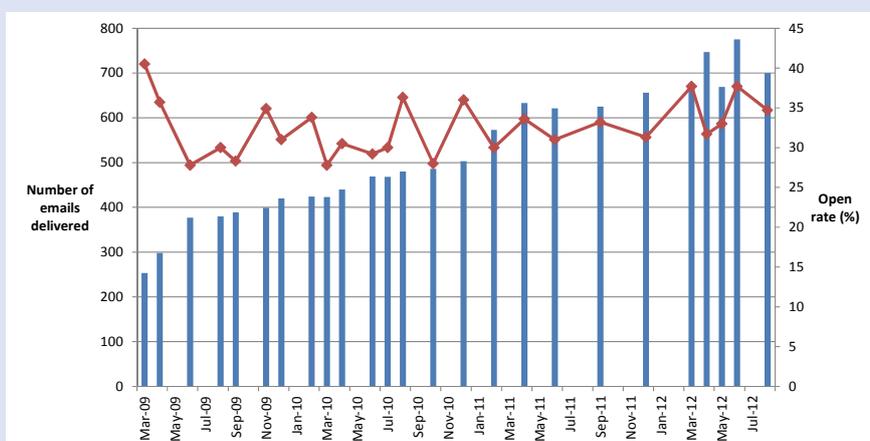
The issues covered are topical and aligned with other program elements. There is usually a main feature, an update of what’s new on the web and a tip.

The first People Matters was sent out in March 2009 to 264 people.



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All farmers & advisers understand the benefits of farm business strategies having a people perspective
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advisers

The distribution of People Matters has increased over 3 years



Outcomes

Over 700 farmers and advisers now subscribe to a monthly up-date on People Matters. 96% of emails that are sent are delivered. The open rate and click rate (number of hyperlinks clicked) are higher than the norm for this form of communication.

In 3.5 years, a total of 24 people have unsubscribed from the newsletter.

Program learning

Use of the online email marketing software 'MailChimp' was chosen to enable more design flexibility, better management of subscribers and feedback on email delivery (overcoming limitations of the mail merge approach that was used initially).

The future

Given the changes that regularly occur in this area, the People Matters format has provided a good mechanism for involving subscribers with the web resources. It is recommended that this or an equivalent mechanism is used as a core part of the program.

What's 'new on the web' tends to reflect changes in the industry

Month	'New on the web'
Mar-09 (Launch)	Generator v3; In2Dairy; Find an adviser, Industrial Relations Victoria; Pastoral Industry Award; Anti-discrimination policy
Apr-09	Example interview questions; Sexual harassment policy template
Jun-09	Careers video segments; Principles of contract law
Aug-09	Revision to Engagement and Reward to incorporate changes to legislation; Contracts and agreements revised; New resources on Fair Work Act and fair dismissal
Sep-09	Health and Safety web pages revised; New templates for safety assessment; Good read - Safety on quad bikes, animal handling, children on farm
Nov-09	People Basics
Dec-09	Share farming resources
Feb-10	Engagement and reward updated; Templates and resources that comply with new Industrial Relations laws and awards
Mar-10	Media centre for news grabs and stories
Apr-10	Updated People Snapshot and People Analysis
Jun-10	Do you know your working style?; Updated People Analysis; Updated versions of contracts and agreements
Aug-10	Working out a remuneration package; Paying employees; Real life stories
Dec-10	Public holidays for Christmas & new year; Meal & rest breaks
Feb-11	Employing people from overseas; Anzac day public holiday; Transition pay rates
Apr-11	Homepage; WA state laws; Hiring from overseas; Paid parental leave; Statutory declaration form
Sep-11	Planning for the future; Health & safety legislation
Mar-12	Leasing; Valuing People Research Project
Apr-12	Easter 2012 Public Holidays; 2011 People Factfinder
Aug-12	New pay rates page
Nov-12	Large Herd Business Retreat SA, 2013 Diploma of HRM

Policy Input

The People in Dairy project has made critical contributions to the policy environment shaping dairy farm workplaces.

Pastoral Award 2010

In 2009, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) proposed changes to the Pastoral Award which would have resulted in overtime payments being applied to the hours regularly worked by employees on dairy farms (for example, before 5am, after 7pm, over 10 hours in one day and over 5 days in one week).

The People in Dairy team and graduates of the diploma provided critical information about dairy farm working conditions that enabled a strong submission to be put to the AIRC for retaining the current arrangements on dairy farms.

Outcome: The program coordinated data to support the National Farmers' Federation's successful negotiation on overtime conditions in the new Pastoral Award 2010 - saving dairy farmers an estimated \$20 million per year.

Victorian Government

Parliamentary Inquiry

into the capacity of the farming sector to attract and retain young farmers and respond to an ageing workforce.

The People in Dairy team coordinated and constructed the response to this inquiry for the dairy industry.

Outcome: The response recommended a series of ways in which the state government could collaborate with the dairy industry to improve the attraction and retention of young people on dairy farms, including:

- Supporting the viability of the farm sector to make it an attractive work prospect for the next generation.
- Supporting farmers to set up workplaces capable of attracting and retaining talent.
- Improving the alignment between workforce demand and supply.

Program learning

Change management programs utilise a range of mechanisms over and above traditional extension activities. Sometimes the opportunities for influence in policy areas are serendipitous and the program must be able to see opportunities and respond flexibly.

The future

Activity in this area is under the guidance of the Dairy Industry People Development Council since its formation in 2011.

Regional Planning



TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Farm businesses have the tools, processes and support to build the people resource capacity
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Understand the specific needs and priorities of different regions
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry

The People in Dairy is more able to support regional ‘people’ priorities by co-planning activities with each of Dairy Australia’s eight Regional Development Programs (RDP).

Context

The process of co-planning a regional people strategy and coordinating its delivery was started in 2011.

The regional plans are informed by each RDP’s priority setting process.

About the planning

Two of *The People in Dairy* ‘core group’ members are designated as the ‘go to’ person for the RDPs:

- Karen Baum has the relationship with WestVic Dairy, TasDairy, DairySA and SubTropical Dairy
- Anne Crawford with Western Dairy, GippsDairy, Murray Dairy and Dairy NSW

The objective is to work together to identify opportunities and plan delivery to suit the local farm management calendar.

Outcomes

An example of a plan is provided below.

Working together has seen the development on synergies across *The People in Dairy* and other regionally based projects such as Workforce Development in Gippsland.

Program learning

Success in this area is Regional Dairy Program specific. In part it depends on whether work in this domain is regarded as a priority and the capacity of the local industry to become involved.

It requires a high degree of connectedness (at least monthly contacts, and a number of regional visits) to establish the working relationship that allows for most collaborative opportunities to be captured.

The future

The People in Dairy will continue to work closely with the RDPs to ensure the program is closely aligned with regional needs and priorities. The aim is to refresh the regional plans on an annual basis.

WestVic Dairy – example of Regional Plan

'People' Planning with WestVic Dairy – 2012

OBJECTIVE – ALIGN THE PEOPLE IN DAIRY PROGRAM WITH ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTVIC DAIRY REGION

Purpose of this session:

- Check **alignment of goals** of WestVic Dairy and The People in Dairy
- Explore the **regional context** – specific activities and resources available to WestVic Dairy that may be important in this area
- Articulate the **'enabling environment'** which The People in Dairy has been developing
- Look for possible **mechanisms to promote the farmer journey** – awareness -> outcomes around people management on farms
- Make a **plan for 2012**
 - Includes activities by WestVic Dairy, The People in Dairy (TPiD), NCDEA and Rural Innovation Research Group (RIRG)
 - Includes interaction with REEC (Mike Weise to facilitate)

PLAN FOR 2012

ACTIVITY	WHAT IS NEEDED?	WHO/WHEN	COMMENTS
1. TPiD Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad communication through WestVic Dairy News 	April edition	WestVic Dairy News , 1-page advertorial
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Online Resources via an 'engagement sheet' /flier 	May – December	TPiD supply WestVic with a 'tip box' for each month
2. Farmer Engagement a) 'Shedinars'	The People in Dairy will work up this concept based on RDP ideas.	K Baum & WVD staff	Maybe deliver to farmers via tanker drop. Make available for Field Days/extension activities
	12-15 ppl = 6 sessions over 12 months TPiD supply WVD with some advertising	K Baum & M Jago	Shedinars might be suited better for SWV (8 x 2hr sessions)
b) People Focus Discussion		K Baum	Discussion group participants may come from completed Focus Farm projects.



Retention Research

A major issue facing the dairy industry in Australia is how to make the sector attractive for the next generation as a place to work and/or invest, as well as improving the retention of people once they enter the sector.

- A workshop with 3 Victorian regional dairy groups to consider research findings and draft plans to support retention in their regions.

Context

Regional dairy groups in Victoria expressed concern to *The People in Dairy* that their initiatives and investment in attracting people into dairy were less effective if people were not retained.

This triggered a regional partnership research project, funded by the Gardiner Foundation, to investigate turnover and retention in Victorian dairy farming, values and practice of high-retention farms, and the development of regional retention strategies.

About the research

The research involved:

- An analysis of dairy industry data on turn-over and retention, and review of global best-practice literature.
- A case study analysis of nine farms chosen for their retention reputations (three farms in each of Gippsland, northern, and south-western Victoria).
- A survey of 31 employees regarding their dairy farms experiences and the factors influencing their intentions to exit employment.

Outcomes

The research indicated that the estimated average turnover rate in the dairy industry is 35%, while the annual exit rate from the industry is 15.5%. Dairy rates are thus over 10% higher when compared to the turnover rate in the Australian international business sectors.

Reasons that dairy farms were able to retain their employees included:

- The development of comprehensive employment strategies, including flexible work hours, training opportunities, career development and mentoring.
- The use of employment strategies that suited the employer's own values and preferred work environment.

Employees who stayed believed their benefits in terms of pay were highly competitive with other dairy farm jobs. They said that what set their employers apart from others was the flexibility in work hours, the limits to weekend work and long hours and the training and development offered (including informal and formal learning opportunities) along with individual attention to career development and mentoring and an enjoyable work environment.

TPiD area	
✓	Workforce planning & action
TPiD objective	
✓	Farms attract and retain the people they need
Enabling environment	
✓	Suitably skilled people are available and eager to work in the industry
Audience	
✓	Prospective employees, Farmers, Regional communities

Advisers played a role in supporting both employers and employees with current and future employment options.

Workshops in the three Victorian dairy regions produced draft plans for addressing retention. The key elements in all three plans included:

- Boosting efforts to improve employer practice.
- Attention to the fate of entrants.
- Creating networks that enable farmers to continue to improve their practice and link up new entrants to better-practice farms.
- Better monitoring and tracking of retention data.

Program Learning

Although this research was prompted by the desire to know more about retention practices on dairy farms, retention was not the prime concern of the farmers but a secondary outcome.

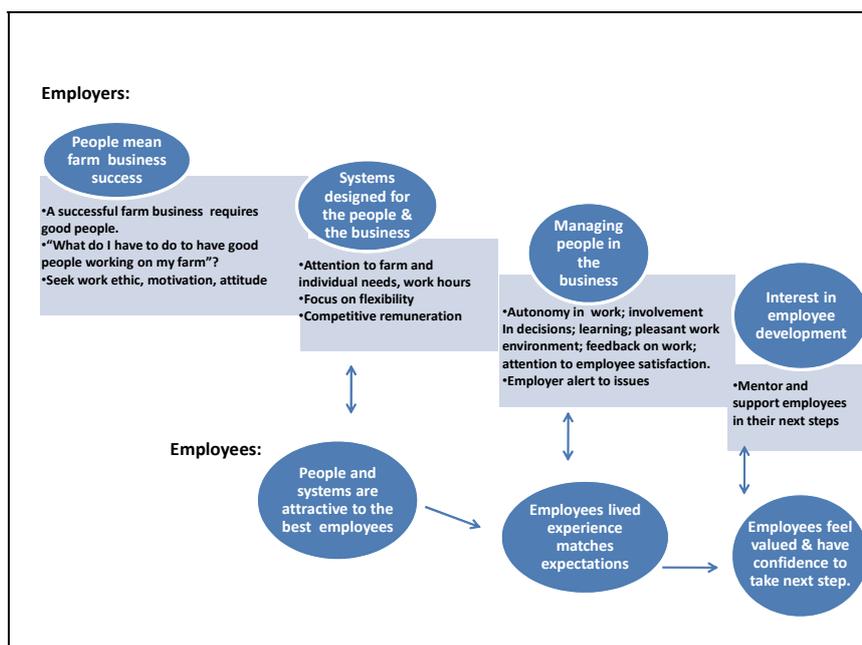
Retention of people on the dairy farms in this study was a consequence of practices employers put in place to achieve other goals such as developing employees and building skills, an enjoyable working environment or smooth running operations. These are likely to be the key areas of interest for other dairy employers.

It was clear that the ‘employee perspective’ is crucial to understand the dynamics of the employment relationship.

The Future

Dairy Australia is funding research in 2012-2013 (by the Rural Innovation Research Group) to develop practical methods to measure retention at the farm and industry levels, and the costs and other impacts of turnover in dairy farming.

What worked and why in retaining people in dairy farming, from case study farms and employee survey



Valuing People in Dairy Business Success

Valuing People in Dairy Business Success is a research project conducted by The Rural Innovation Research Group at University Melbourne on behalf of *The People in Dairy*.

Context

Good ‘people management’ is widely acknowledged as an important factor in overall dairy farm productivity, however the actual benefits are complex and difficult to quantify. Linking what people do on farm, and how well they do it, to overall business performance is the first step in identifying the value of focussing on the people in a farm business.

The research question asks ‘What is the value proposition to farm businesses from improving people management?’

A pilot was undertaken to establish appropriate mechanisms to measure the strength of people management outcomes and the analytical approaches to understanding that impact on business success.

The research methodology

A pilot study was conducted with data from 40 farms. Surveys were completed by farm/owner managers and employees. They provided data on employee/employer perceptions of the expectations and promises- regarding autonomy, benefits,

growth, rewards, and the work environment- that shape the farm relationship.

The study examined the extent of overlap in employee/employer perceptions of these factors, and the extent to which expectations were perceived as fulfilled. This data was correlated with farm business summary information to see if there was a relationship between people-centred management and farm profitability.

Outcomes

Preliminary analysis identified significant relationships between employee performance and farm owner/manager job satisfaction and personal satisfaction with farming.

Program learning

Critical success factors for increasing participation of farm businesses in the study include the existence of ongoing relationships between data collectors and farm managers (such as an advisory relationship).

The future

A study is currently being planned in collaboration with the Dairy New Zealand People and Business program. It aims to bring together data from both countries on the current knowledge about how improved people management contributes to farm business success.

TPiD area	
✓	Farm
TPiD objective	
✓	All farmers & advisers understand the benefits of farm business strategies having a people perspective
Enabling environment	
✓	Industry has agreed terminology, conceptual frameworks and core resources for best practice
Audience	
✓	Farmers & Advisers

Workforce Planning & Action



This project developed a process for regional groups to better understand the current system of people development in their region to improve their ability to influence and improve workforce planning.

Context

A common issue facing rural industries is how to plan and act collectively on workforce development- specifically when an industry like dairy consists of a large number of dispersed small to medium businesses. On their own, these businesses command little power in the context of 'workforce size' when engaging with employment and/or economic development services.

About the research

After a comprehensive literature review of workforce planning in rural/non-rural sectors, the Baw Baw shire in West Gippsland was chosen as a case-study for the development of a regional workforce planning process. Dairy is one of a number of agricultural industries competing for employees in the area.

Survey data indicated that around 130 extra paid positions on dairy farms in the region would be advertised over the following 12 months (2008-9). Taking into account turnover, this projected demand represented a significant expansion in the workforce (i.e. a 25% increase in the paid dairy workforce in the Baw Baw area).

This kind of challenge requires a systemic regional planning process, which the Workforce Planning and Action project developed through engagement with stakeholders in the region.

Outcomes

The work done in the Baw Baw shire has established that the Workforce Planning and Action process involves:

- Understanding the regional context and needs.
- Identifying stakeholders.
- Prioritizing investment.
- Sourcing the funds to act.

Following the Baw Baw study, GippsDairy invested in a Dairy Workforce Coordinator and a Workforce Development Project.

Program learning

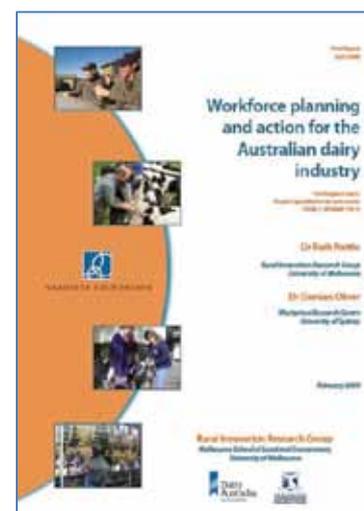
Results from the pilot indicate that a regional capacity to act:

- Helps prioritise industry efforts and increases their visibility.
- Assists in increasing the ability of employment and training services to meet farm needs.
- Helps farmers to connect with regional services.

The future

The framework is being used by the dairy industry to plan activities at different scales and for different regional issues. Responsibility for this project component moved to Dairy Australia's 'Industry People and Capability' group in 2012, and the model has since been applied in Tasmania and Western Victoria.

TPiD area	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workforce planning & action
TPiD objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Better workforce planning and more coordinated action
Enabling environment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry has a feasible workforce planning process
Audience	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industry policy-makers



Young Dairy Farmer Network Hub

The Young Dairy Farmer network hub linked young dairy farmers and agri-professionals in dairying regions across Australia. The hub provided the framework for regional networks to link and exchange information at a national level.

Context

The dairy industry in each state invests in networks of young dairy farmers (18-40 years of age) to promote opportunities for them to get together for farm visits, seminars, training and social events.

Networks have formed in:

- Victoria – the Young Dairy Development Program
- Tasmania – the Next Gen Young Farmers program
- South Australia - Young Dairy Farmer Network SA
- Queensland and northern NSW – Young Dairy Network

At the time that the ‘Hub’ was activated there was no formal or informal link between them all.

About the hub

Network activities have included local and interstate study tours, technical seminars- addressing financial, share-farming and dairy business topics- as well as leadership development and trivia nights.

Participants in the hub have also been connected through a series of Next Generation Forums. Conducted over 1.5 days, the forums included

guest speakers and networking opportunities.

Outcomes

Provided a ‘national hub’ for the 12 Young Dairy Farmer Networks (which operate in all regions except NSW)

Ran a national workshop for farmer leaders and executive officers of these groups

Linked the groups with each other and with other industry programs, enhancing their effectiveness in supporting and developing young dairy farmers and new industry entrants

Program learning

Coordination across groups as well as resource and ideas sharing is essential for sustaining the network.

The future

In October 2012, a National Young Dairy Network Coordinator was appointed by Dairy Australia and the program is now managed through the Industry & People Capability program.

New Generations Forums

Year	Participants	Score*
2009	25	N/A
2010	17	N/A
2011	23*	4.3

*How would you rate each session and guest speaker on interest and informativeness? 1 = low, 5 = high.

“it was great to hear how others operate.”

– Young dairy farmer, New Generation Forum, 2011

Narratives of change to 2012

Thirty-seven narratives of change arising from the program activities from 2008 to 2012 are offered here using a format suggested for an external review of the program in October and November 2012. They are arranged by topic to tell the story of people on farm from recruitment to succession.

Involvement	Case Report	Farm/Business Chronology	Topic	TPID Program Engagement	Page
Farm	Bruce and Lynne Newton	Building the team	Getting it right employing staff	Diploma and website	74
Farm	Loretta, Allan & Megan Warren	Building the team	Recruitment/employing people	PeopleGPS	74
Farm	Reggie and Tanya Davis	Building the team	Recruitment made easy	Diploma and website	75
Farm	Lindberg family	Building the team	Preparing for first employee	Dairy Works (precursor to PeopleGPS in WA)	75
Farm	Julie and Errol Gerber	Building the team	Recruitment	PeopleGPS	76
Farm	Andy and Cathy Lostroh	Building the team	Taking a professional approach to employing people	People GPS and the Diploma	76
Farm	Ray and Di Gresham	Building the team	Communication, recruitment	Website	77
Farm	Kerry Callow	Building the team	Being ready to employ	PeopleGPS	77
Farm	Adam Roberts	Managing people	The benefits of keeping staff	PeopleGPS, website	78
Farm	Anna and Warwick*	Managing people	Time to change	PeopleGPS, website,	78
Farm	Barbara and Terence*	Managing people	Improving people management skills	PeopleGPS	79
Farm	Bianca and her father*	Managing people	A shared experience	Large Herds Business Retreats	80
Farm	Kevin and Frances McDowall	Managing people	Getting the calf job sorted	TPID advisers	81
Farm	Jason Koenig	Managing people	People analysis and productivity	People Focus and Website	81
Farm	Craig & Claire, Jim & Michelle*	Managing people	Use of <i>The People in Dairy</i> website	Website	82
Farm	Steve, Rebecca and Jason*	Managing people	Use of advisers, obtaining value from training	Diploma	83
Farm	Leigh and Sally, and Mark their manager*	Managing people	Setting up flexible contracts with an adviser and the next generation of staff	Diploma	84

Involvement	Case Report	Farm/Business Chronology	Topic	Engagement	Program	Page
Farm	Lyndell and Rod Cope	Managing people	Documenting farm policies and procedures	PeopleFocus and website		85
Farm	Donna, Ray & Jason Graham	Managing people	Documenting farm protocols, farm safety	TPID workshop (People GPS precursor)		85
Farm	Roma and Glenn Britnell	Managing people	Business coaching support in HR management	Diploma PeopleGPS)		86
Farm	John and Kathy Dalton	Managing people	Employment contracts, remuneration packages	PeopleFocus and website		86
Farm	Peter and Sue*	Managing people	Growing a good team	LHBR		87
Farm	Lisa and Malcolm	Managing people	Managing human resources	Diploma and website		87
Farm	Jodie and Michael Connor	Managing people	Becoming an employer of choice	PeopleFocus and diploma		88
Farm	Isaac Johnstone	Managing people	Making it work- leadership and compliance	Diploma		88
Farm	Bryan and Jo Dickson	Getting retention right	Engaging and retaining farm managers	Website		89
Farm	Bruce Grant	Getting retention right	Having a benchmark	Website		89
Farm	Noel and Anne Campbell	Retention, share-farming	Staff retention and share-farming agreements	Website		89
Farm	Kay and David Lewis*	Share-farming	Exploitation of share farmers	TPID adviser		90
Farm	Jan Raleigh and Phillip Stasiw	Business transition	Changing hands	Diploma and website		90
Farm	Hans van Wees	Workplace safety	Auditing farm safety	Website		91
Corporate Farm	Cossack Holdings	Getting retention right	Having a benchmark	Website		91
Service business	Murray Whiting	Knowledge development	Professional Support	Website and Accountants seminar		92
Service business	The Vet Group	Growing a business	A business model	Diploma and website		92
Service business	Jol Dutton	Succession	Signposting on succession	Diploma and website		93
Farm consultant	Charlie*	Business systems	Developing new advisory skills	Diploma		93
Farm consultant	Barry*	Growing a business	Building the toolkit	Diploma		94

* Most of the case reports use real names but pseudonyms have been adopted for interviews with people conducted for research purposes and are shown with an asterisk.

Family	Bruce and Lynne Newton
Date reported	December 2011
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Getting it right employing staff
Context	Bruce and Lynne Newton run a 700 cow dairy farm in south west Victoria. Their eldest son Tim worked with them for 7 years when they first moved to Australia from New Zealand. When he left to run his own farm they were in need of some assistance.
Link with project	Lynne had attended a PeopleGPS course and their farm adviser had HRM training.
Actions taken	They were able to utilise the resources on the The People in Dairy website with their adviser's support to engage a new herd manager and farmhand, knowing that they were compliant and competitive in their pay scales.
Impact	For Bruce and Lynne it was worth making the effort to get staff employment right and to date they have been very happy with the outcome. They now have an experienced herd manager who is fitting in very well with the business, feels well rewarded and recognised for his efforts and has a role in the business that matches his requirements. This has allowed them the flexibility of time off, of handing over some of the time consuming tasks and given them confidence to continue to grow the business. Getting the people right was so important for this to happen.

Family	Loretta and Allan Warren and daughter Megan
Date reported	November 2011
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Recruitment/employing people
Context	When the Warrens moved to a bigger dairy farm at Kyabram Northern Victoria, they had to start employing people – about 5 full time staff.
Link with project	Loretta attended PeopleGPS
Actions taken	<p><i>"It became clear during PeopleGPS that we needed to get the work to fit the employee and not make the employee fit the work.... We now have a valuable work team and we appreciate their input and work ethics."</i></p> <p>Used the website resources for staff recruitment to ensure they hired the right person for the position available.</p> <p>Introduced staff performance appraisals and work reviews.</p> <p>Involve staff in their farm objectives and how their roles contribute to it (eg reducing cell count)</p> <p>Documented a range of farm policies and procedures such as OHS, stock handling I milking and code of conduct.</p>
Impact	<p><i>"I had looked at The People in Dairy website in the past and used some of the templates but never appreciated how much information was available through the website until I did PeopleGPS."</i></p> <p><i>"A lot of the templates are set out in The People in Dairy website, which is wonderful as it makes the job less daunting and allows you to tailor the documents to suit the individual farm operation. I've used a number of templates to write job descriptions, an induction checklist for new staff as well as individual flexibility arrangements."</i></p>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> magazine Nov/Dec 2011

"It became clear in PeopleGPS that we needed to get the work to fit the employee."

– Loretta Warren



Family	Reggie and Tanya Davis
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Recruitment made easy
Context	Reggie and Tanya Davis milk 600 cows near Camperdown in south west Victoria. They recently expanded their business and required an additional farmhand.
Link with project	Reggie was aware of the <i>The People in Dairy</i> program and also the services offered by farm advisers at The Vet Group.
Actions taken	He and Tanya appointed them to do their recruitment and after an initial consultation, they were much clearer about what their needs were and the compliance that was required. The Vet Group took on the whole task of advertising, interviewing and checking referees. Once they had a short list they arranged interviews and a selection was made. They then supplied a contract of employment and all relevant documents to support the engagement.
Impact	The process of recruitment was made so much easier having a consultant to do most of the work and to access all the compliance requirements on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website. For a busy couple this was a much less painful process than in the past when applicants can call at any time and be difficult to keep tab of. Also having the guidance of an experienced HR person gave them much more confidence in their selection.

Family	Lindberg family
Date reported	January 2009
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Preparing for first employee
Context	Neville and Carolyn Lindberg operated their 320-cow dairy farm at Mount Barker in WA with help from five members of the extended family. They were thinking about hiring their first non-family employee. Carolyn doesn't come from a dairying background and was aware that the dairy industry involved different employment conditions from mainstream jobs in terms of hours, work environment and lifestyle.
Link with project	Participated in Dairy Works (a precursor of PeopleGPS run in WA)
Actions taken	<p>Formalised roles of family members that had been previously informal. Held a workshop on working together and goal setting.</p> <p>Used People Analysis to examine the efficiency, roles and responsibilities of the people on the farm and to check the working conditions on offer. It showed it was cost effective to employ a tractor driver in the hay season and a contractor for heifer AI.</p> <p>Used templates from the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website to develop farm policy and procedures manuals for employees – so they were ready when the time came to recruit their first employee.</p> <p>Followed the recruitment process on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website to hire an employee for the hay season. Used the templates for the ad, interview questions, induction checklist and the letter for unsuccessful applicants.</p>
Impact	<p><i>"When everyone involved in a farm business is a family member we tend to have various roles but nothing is formalised. We did a session on getting people to work together and goal setting as a way of improving the efficiency of the way we operate. We now have clear job descriptions which have refined 'who does what' and this helps avoid duplication. Having clear responsibilities set out means we also understand each other's contribution to the business."</i></p> <p>Using the website gave them confidence they were doing the right thing as employers and meeting legal obligations.</p>
Other notes	Article in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Jan/Feb 2009

Family	Julie and Errol Gerber
Date reported	May 2010
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Recruitment
Context	Julie and Errol Gerber dairy at Lowood in SE Queensland. From 2000 to 2007 they expanded their operation and by 2007 were milking 600 cows through a 20-aside double up dairy. They made the conscious decision to employ staff rather than build a bigger dairy. They recognise some of their staff will be transitory but aim to retain a nucleus of trained long term people. 2007 was a challenging year in terms of staffing. They sought assistance from a HR consultant and in 2008 employed a general manager to take over some of the HR duties. Determined to continue to improve their people management Julie attended a pilot PeopleGPS course in 2009.
Link with project	PeopleGPS
Actions taken	Discovered a wealth of resources on the website. <i>"I found the recruitment section invaluable as it makes you really sit down and think about what the job is and what skills you require."</i> <i>"We found The People in Dairy's interview scoring system particularly useful especially when we use an interview panel."</i> They also hired Jennie Corkhill to prepare Individual Flexibility Agreements
Impact	Improved their recruitment process and confidence to find information on the website when they need it
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> May/June 2010

Family	Andy and Cathy Lostroh
Date reported	January 2011
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Recruitment: Taking a professional approach to employing people
Context	Having never employed anyone before Andy wanted to do the right thing but quickly became confused by the different messages he heard about rules and regulations around employing staff.
Link with project	Attended a PeopleGPS course
Actions taken	Wrote a series of farm documents and learnt how to manage roster to meet award requirements. <i>"The activities in PeopleGPS improved my computer skills and now I can easily find my way around and use the templates and tools."</i>
Impact	Found the interaction with other farms at GPS just as helpful as the content: <i>"It was really helpful to hear other farmers' experiences and how they dealt with situations on their farms"</i> <i>"The website made light work out of creating important farm documents."</i> <i>"We finished the course with a range of documents for our own farm, and the confidence to use The People in Dairy website to deal with further issues as they arise."</i>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Jan/Feb 2011

"PeopleGPS enabled Cathy and I to lift our professionalism without a major hassle. We've tightened up that side of our business and it's nice to know we are doing things by the book."
 – Andy Lostroh



Family	Ray and Di Gresham
Date reported	September 2008
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Communication, recruitment
Context	Ray and Di Gresham dairy near Gympie in SE Queensland, milking 250 cows year round and have employed staff for the past eight years.
Link with project	Used resources on the The People in Dairy website
Actions taken	Used information from the website on staff management and recruitment. Refined interview questions using the sample questions on The People in Dairy website
Other notes	Article appeared in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Sep/Oct 2008.

Family	Kerry Callow
Date reported	July 2010
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Being ready to employ when the opportunity arose
Context	Kerry Callow dairies at Macarthur in SW Victoria, milking 160 cows. When she participated in PeopleGPS pilot she wasn't employing staff; she participated mostly in her off-farm industry role (people and careers issues were a high priority for the local UDV). Not long after she had the opportunity to share a dairy trainee with another local farmer and was able to take up this opportunity as a result of what she'd learnt at PeopleGPS.
Link with project	Kerry attended PeopleGPS (pilot course)
Actions taken	<i>"Having done PeopleGPS I knew it was important to start with a written job description and clear instructions about the tasks she was expected to perform. I was confident I could quickly and easily put those documents together using the templates available on The People in Dairy website."</i>
Impact	<i>"PeopleGPS gave me the confidence to take a professional approach as an employer, following formal procedures such as providing an induction program and conducting performance reviews. It sounds daunting but it's actually really easy for dairy farmers because everything is on The People in Dairy Website. It is self-explanatory and you can work through the topics that you are interested in at the time."</i> <i>"PeopleGPS opened my mind to a different way of employing people, meeting regulatory requirements and organising the farm and managing the staff to create a productive workplace."</i>
Other notes	Article published in July/August 2010 issue of <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> magazine



"PeopleGPS gave me the confidence - I knew it was important to start with a written job description and clear instructions about the tasks she was expected to perform."

– Kerry Callow

Family	Adam Roberts
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Tom Walsh
Topic	The benefits of keeping staff
Context	Adam employs 3-4 full time people and now he needs to learn how to manage them.
Link with project	Adam attended a PeopleGPS course at Demo Dairy in Terang; use of The People in Dairy website.
Actions taken	Since doing the course Adam has implemented regular staff meetings, performance appraisals and roles and responsibilities documents.
Impact	He has found his staff to be more contented and productive. The workforce has been very stable with good retention and some staff who have left wanting to come back again. Adam puts this all down to The People in Dairy and the PeopleGPS course. Adam benefits because the stability gives him a calmer lifestyle and also benefits financially. Adam has saved more than \$20,000 (an estimate based on a keeping a staff member who would have left, at 50% of their annual wage).

Family	Anna and Warwick*
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	Time to change
Context	Anna and Warwick, share farming with an equity partner, 20 years experience, 900 cows, Tasmania. <i>'Our farm goal is basically to be as profitable as possible. We run it as a business, not as just as farm. So basically we're just looking at our return on our investment. So we're looking to maximise our cow production, maximise our production per hectare and I'm a firm believer that we've got to get that compromise on both, we can't just go for hectare, production of hectare and we can't go just production per cow.'</i>
Link with project	Warwick completed a PeopleGPS. Anna has used The People in Dairy website, and Penny Williams (The People in Dairy HR Diploma graduate and consultant based in Tasmania) has reviewed an employment contract.
Actions taken	Using the website, writing staff contracts, seeking advice from a The People in Dairy -trained adviser. <i>"...even though we went onto the site and developed it pretty well ourselves, we were just still more comfortable getting an independent person to look at it.</i> <i>... We've always said we needed contracts but never have. We did – actually no, we did have one about five or six years ago and then they – the issue comes is, when you're employing somebody, you're usually short staffed. So basically you're flat out and then trying to interview people and therefore you're actually even short of time and then you don't get those jobs like contracts done. So that's the biggest issue. When you are short of staff you need to have this and we just said this time it has to be done, mainly because we had other issues.</i> <i>I'd say we've got our work contract and were going to have to make sure we're handing them out all the time and reviewing it. But yeah, basically it's just a matter of ploughing through it mostly. Every time we do things, well you learn something from it. Every time you do – well you'll do interviews – you think back what do I need to do differently. It's quite interesting today, I had a phone call to be a referee for an ex worker and that was from a company. Their referee check was actually completely different – he was actually sure I virtually answered a lot of questions that they – yeah, she was filling a sheet in because I could tell asking the questions and that was just a different way of doing it."</i>
Impact	<i>"The main reason I did it because I was looking at further education myself... Just knowing all the regulations and that's probably had more impact than the – yeah, it's knowing where we've got to do everything by the book, that's so whether to cover our backsides and really to cover ourselves from getting sued or getting claims against us. I don't go out – we want to do the right thing by employees but we've just got to make sure we're dotting our (i's) and crossing our (t's).</i> <i>We've done a lot of field days and short courses through departments over the years and [getting like that was why we do GPS]... I think that's where we need to head and get that staff pull behind us a bit more. By having qualifications I think we'll encourage more people into the industry."</i>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from The People in Dairy program team

Family	Barbara and Terence*
Date reported	September 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	Improving people management skills
Context	Barbara and Terence are farming in partnership with their son Luke. They milk 440 cows in Tasmania. Their staff includes one full-time employee, plus three part-time/casual milking staff.
Link with project	Barbara and Terence completed a PeopleGPS course.
Actions taken	As a result of undertaking PeopleGPS, Barbara implemented many of the strategies in recruiting their next staff member, including developing a position description and interviewing. The contacts made with other farmers during the course were also invaluable for generating new ideas for managing staff. Most importantly though, was the opportunity for her husband and son to be exposed to sound people management principles.
Impact (in Barbara's words)	<p><i>"I got a lot out of [PeopleGPS] – because of my background I thought I was pretty au fait with that area. But I actually learned a lot of things from the farmers that also did the course, like Warwick, and set up a bit of an email group...So I actually got on The People in Dairy website and I found a whole recruiting and engaging saved me so much work because it was just there – the process to finding a position description; attracting people; interviewing.</i></p> <p><i>... we were looking to put someone on in May and then when I got to the GPS Course in May, was just in the process. I think I'd advertised and we were about to [interview]... It was just a little bit late for the first part of it but it certainly helped me in the latter part, probationary period and how we appraise staff. So yeah I accessed it first through the website and found it really helpful and current. So that was great.</i></p> <p><i>Terence I think yeah just going to that day with the course made him think a bit more about that that was an area that he could probably improve in. Again it was the sort of thing that I was always telling them – because having worked as a manager valuing people, staff. But it was good that he heard it from Frank within the course, but more importantly from the likes of Warwick or the other guys there. So that may be about it. I think he also came away with things in that area that he thought we could work on that we probably haven't.</i></p> <p><i>I think we're better with the way we manage our people – our overall philosophy is – again in that course there's a lot of talk about adapting your system to suit the people. Be quite clear on your system and your business and how it works and either party might have to adapt or change to get the best. So I guess the starting point for me in managing people is getting the right person to suit our [system] – and then it's very much a give and take thing."</i></p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from The People in Dairy program team

Family	Bianca and her father*
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	A shared experience
Context	<p>Bianca manages a large farm with her Dad, with over 900 cows. The family also has other farm investments. On the main farm their staff includes three full-time farm workers, one part-time farm worker and two casuals, as well as Bianca. At times there is also input from her father, husband and brother.</p> <p>Bianca has a background in management, and had only returned to farming in the past 5 years. She sees her role as the herd manager, running the day-to-day operations of the farm, liaising with staff and scheduling work, and overseeing all aspects of the farm.</p>
Link with project	Bianca and her father attended a Large Herds Business Retreat, on the encouragement of their adviser (a <i>The People in Dairy</i> HR Diploma graduate).
Actions taken	<p>Since attending the Large Herds Business Retreat (two months prior to the interview) the number one priority was to revisit the performance reviews. <i>“To look after the staff we’ve got and ensure that we’re thinking about their future and keeping them growing and happy within their job and one of the key things for that is they’re all due a performance review.”</i> This was an ongoing project, together with a salary restructure, with Bianca putting in time to finalise the process before meeting with staff. Bianca recognises the importance of being well prepared for performance reviews, and also to handle their introduction to the staff in a non-threatening manner. There were also other benefits from attending the Large Herds Business Retreat for their farming situation.</p>
Impact (in Bianca’s words)	<p><i>“The greatest impact – and don’t tell dad this – but I do think he had an epiphany at the course, that the words that I had been saying for the last five years that he would poo poo as just theoretical, Bianca’s university mumbo jumbo – suddenly clicked to him and I suddenly felt I could actually communicate and he would believe what I said about things. That was the biggest impact. It wouldn’t have been as good if he’d gone to that course and had that epiphany by himself...”</i></p> <p><i>Well one of the key things was he realised the difference between the leader and the manager role. So – and there are different types of leader, but in terms of leading the whole cruise ship – being the visionary leader – he suddenly realised that that was his role and that the day-to-day management was another role and that not always are you good at both the leadership role and the managerial one. The managerial one – how people-centric that is. Not something that’s ever been his strong point – the softer side of people management...</i></p> <p><i>..He realised that he didn’t want to be in that role, he wasn’t overly good in that role and that he could see that people like me were better at that role and I don’t ever pretend to be good at that visionary leader role. You don’t have to be good at all of them. So that was one thing that really did click for him...You’ve then got that shared language that you can use to discuss things later on in another forum that you can – just like it was at the course.</i></p> <p><i>It really was one of the best collections of like-minded people that I’ve ever been too. I’ve been to other Murray Dairy Large Herd things and I felt that it was a lot of – it was just a room full of egos and I just hate that sort of thing – it’s a very male thing and I’m very non-ego related. That wasn’t the type of group that was there that day. They were all genuinely wanting to learn and they were all genuinely large farmers. There is – again – a difference between large farmers and small farmers and it was – it’s not that it’s a waste of time dealing with small farmers – it’s not – but I certainly found that there was great benefit to have like-minded [farmers there]...</i></p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Family	Kevin and Frances McDowall
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Tom Walsh
Topic	Getting the calf job sorted
Context	Kevin and Frances McDowall run a 400 cow herd as well as a newly developed farm also milking about 400 cows. They do this with their two sons Paul and Peter. For many years they have had real problems with high levels of disease and deaths in their calves (estimated to be worth approximately \$500 per calf when they died). They engaged veterinarians from The Vet Group to help them deal with this problem.
Link with project	Use of <i>The People in Dairy</i> trained advisers
Actions taken	A lot of management advice was provided as well as changes in calf rearing facilities. This improved things but it soon became obvious to the vets that there was no system in place to define the roles and responsibilities for people on the farm. As a consequence there was no efficiency in the management systems especially the calf rearing. The vets turned to <i>The People in Dairy</i> trained advisers in The Vet Group to help firstly with defining what was needed and then to engage a calf rearing employee to manage the 500 odd calves that were being reared each year. A position description was developed and the recruitment process is currently underway. The future plan is to define roles and responsibilities for everyone on the farm. This will help to avoid the doubling up of actions that are occurring now. This would not have happened if the farm advisers had not been able to demonstrate some solid resources behind them to carry out the task. The most significant of these resources is <i>The People in Dairy</i> website materials.
Impact	Once the responsibility for calf-rearing was sorted the number of calves lost dropped dramatically – about 50 extra calves survived in the first year – which was about \$25,000 asset value retained.

Family	Jason Koenig
Date reported	July 2009
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	People analysis
Context	Jason manages a 900-cow corporate dairy with eight staff at Buffalo in South Gippsland.
Link with project	Participated in a People Focus group (precursor for PeopleGPS).
Actions taken	Measured staff productivity using the People Analysis tool on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website. Used reports from people analysis to demonstrate what the farm and staff were achieving at weekly meetings with the business owners. Used templates on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website to write position descriptions. During recruitment he streamlined the interview process by using sample interview questions from <i>The People in Dairy</i> website for recruitment. Documented a manual of the farm's standard operating procedures. Introduced annual performance reviews following approach set out on <i>The People in Dairy</i> website.
Impact	When milk prices dropped in 2009, Jason and the business owners had the confidence to resist cutting back on staff (based on results from the <i>The People in Dairy</i> People Analysis tool). Instead they increased cow numbers and milk production.
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> July/Aug 2009.



"I'm conscious that the owners see a bill for wages each month – which can be a hot topic, given the current milk price – but with the report from the People Analysis, they can see what is being achieved by the staff and where their money goes."

– Jason Koenig

**The People in Dairy:
2006 to 2012 and beyond**

Family	Craig and Claire, and their staff Jim and Michelle*
Date reported	August, 2011
Reporter	Ruth Nettle (during interviews with employers and employees on 9 farms as part of research on retention funded by the Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation, 2011)
Topic	Use of <i>The People in Dairy</i> website
Context	At one of the interviews, the employers (Craig and Claire) talked about how they have used <i>The People in Dairy</i> website amongst other things to keep on top of employment. Craig and Claire have a dairy farm in Western Victoria milking 450 cows and with 2 full time employees + 1 part-time employee.
Link with project	Craig and Claire have been recognized as good employers in the WestVic dairy region and have prioritized having a good workplace for themselves and their staff over many years. They do not have a direct association with <i>The People in Dairy</i> program and have not attended any People in Dairy events. Craig and Claire have been involved in training programs in the past and conferences about the issue of employment and have made use of industry material over the years to improve the overall working conditions and make their farm more attractive to the people involved. <i>"...I think [retaining employees] is really important. ... we've gone off and we've done a lot of courses ...I think it is important because you build up a relationship with the people that work with you.."</i> (Craig)
Actions taken	<i>The People in Dairy</i> website is now one of the tools a best-practice employer like Craig and Claire use to keep up to date and introduce new arrangements: <i>"when you actually lose staff,...you're six months behind what you want to do because you're training up, making sure everything's spot on."</i> (Claire)... <i>"I think we're more focused on what can we do to keep them here"</i> (Craig) Craig and Claire have recently put effort into the design of flexible rosters that restrict the number of consecutive morning milkings and ensure they diversify the job experiences: <i>"Jim does Thursday mornings and Friday mornings. So he only had to do two early milkings. Jon does two early milkings and Michelle then does ...four early milkings."</i> (Craig)... <i>"...we are very flexible ...as in if you want to have a day off or something comes up ...we say just yell out."</i> (Craig)
Impact	Craig and Claire's staff were glowing about their employers in terms of having an enjoyable place to work with lots of flexibility. This environment was influencing the retention of their staff. <i>"So If I hadn't got involved with that [the social aspect of the workplace] and enjoyed my work environment, I wouldn't have stayed there. It's lovely being out there and I almost feel like I sort of owe them something because they've given me that opportunity".</i> (Michelle-casual employee) Both employees value the flexibility of their work schedule and the feeling of not being overloaded on the job. <i>"I'm not getting burnt out, I'm not doing the 70 plus hours a week. I'm only doing my 45, 40 hours. If I need a day off I just let Claire and Craig know and I get a day off. There's no hassle there."</i> (Jim- farmhand) In addition, the employees feel better off by having employers that value learning and the incentives they get to keep building their skills and knowledge. <i>"I love learning ... and it helps you understand your job so much more... "</i> (Michelle) Craig and Claire rely on up-to-date information from <i>The People in Dairy</i> website and other sources to ensure their people management practices remain the best for their business and for their staff.
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Family	Steve and his employees Rebecca and Jason*
Date reported	August, 2011
Reporter	Ruth Nettle (during interviews with employers and employees on 9 farms as part of research on retention funded by the Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation, 2011)
Topic	Use of advisers and obtaining value from training
Context	At one of the interviews an employer talked about the importance of their adviser in their overall farm management and in their employment management. Steve is a dairy farmer from Northern Victoria and milks 270 cows with 2 staff and relief milkers.
Link with project	<p>Steve has not been directly involved in People in Dairy activities or events, however his farm adviser, with whom he has worked with over a number of years has graduated from <i>The People in Dairy</i> HR diploma. Steve has worked with his adviser to develop flexible agreements in job duties and hours and prioritises good conditions. He has changed his way of doing business. He believes that farmers need this kind of support as they can be really helpful tools and framework to manage things better. <i>"[the adviser] has been very important. That's the good thing ...he can compare us to his other clients."</i> (Steve)</p> <p>Steve sees that keeping employees on the farm has several potential benefits for the business. He believes that, mature employment relationships bring stability. In his opinion, reliability and trust are other key positive outcomes of good long term relationships and are highly beneficial for the farm. In addition, people get to know how the farm is operated leading to a better and more efficient farm management. <i>"But I do value the reliability of labour and the long term commitment as well."</i> (Steve)</p>
Actions taken	<p>The combination of flexible work agreements (developed with the adviser), provision of off-farm training and his belief in providing an enjoyable work environment has created highly engaged employees. Steve has always encouraged staff to participate in training as he believes everyone gets the benefits of it. <i>"Both Rebecca and Jason have been off and done the milk quality production course, for a day which they said was fabulous."</i></p> <p>Both employees think that Steve has been great in terms of being flexible, open in communication and looking after them. <i>"I don't think there's anyone else out there more flexible than Steve and Kim ...- they're just so easy to get along with. Nothing is a hassle. Anything you want is there for you."</i> (Jason)</p> <p>Both employees believe that they are on a better off situation about their wages compared to other people in the industry. Because of that, they feel valued for what they do. <i>"Steve gave me a very, very good wage. I wouldn't get that off any other dairy farmer. (Jason)... 'I'm still on fantastic pay compared to what a lot of farm workers are on..."</i> (Rebecca)</p>
Impact	<p>Steve has invested in staff training and says that having employees bringing new ideas on board and challenging the status quo are seen as positive outcomes:</p> <p><i>"It's very, very – it's pleasing for me to see how the staff do take an interest in keeping the cell counts below, you know, 250 and that sort of thing...They brought stuff back [from training] that we've now implemented for thermodurics and just cleaning the milk part and keeping bacto counts down and that sort of thing and the reason why we do thermodurics."</i></p> <p>Creating a work environment that supports milk quality goals so that cell counts are kept below 250,000 is worth about \$15,000 to a 270 cow farm in milk payments alone (not including cow health).</p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Family	Leigh and Sally, and Mark their manager*
Date reported	August, 2011
Reporter	Ruth Nettle (during interviews with employers and employees on 9 farms as part of research on retention funded by the Geoffery Gardiner Dairy Foundation, 2011)
Topic	Setting up flexible work contracts with an adviser & building the next generation of farm managers
Context	At one of the interviews an employer talked about the importance of their adviser in setting up their employment contracts. This adviser had completed the NCDEA- <i>The People in Dairy</i> HR diploma. Leigh and Sally milk 450 cows in Northern Victoria with 2 full time employees.
Link with project	Leigh and Sally have not participated in formal People in Dairy activities but are aware of <i>The People in Dairy</i> program and are very aware that their adviser has completed <i>The People in Dairy</i> HR diploma. Leigh and Sally believe <i>"You're only as good as your people"</i> when it comes to the running of the farm.
Actions taken	<p>To retain employees, Leigh and Sally have implemented a holistic plan, with their adviser, through the use of practices to keep staff satisfied, committed and willing to stay on the farm. These have included a formal recruiting process, providing flexible work schedules and a clear job description through a flexible work agreement, opportunities for learning and feedback on performance. Recently, Leigh and Sally were looking to create an employment structure with their senior manager that would allow some equity interest in their farm and also provide more flexible arrangements to both employees. Leigh and Sally have used professional assistance from an adviser to set up flexible work contracts but have also sought advice from other experienced farmers. A flexible work schedule and a reasonable workload are offered to keep the job more enjoyable: <i>"...we were pretty cognizant of well let's make it enjoyable for him, he does a heck of a good job. Let's not drive him to a position where he's over fatigued... They need time to do their thing away from the business."</i></p> <p>As Leigh and Sally consider their need to step back from the day to day operations of the business, Leigh believes engaging employees on the farm operations decision making and providing flexibility on how the job is done also helps employee motivation and commitment to the interests of the farm. <i>"...you're going to have to have a pretty strong pool of people on the farm that are able to manage it in your absence. Indeed, probably the smart way to do that is for them to start to take some equity in the business"</i>. Leigh has worked with his adviser to develop up contractual ways for Mark, his senior manager, to grow equity in farm assets.</p>
Impact	<p>Leigh was happy with how the new contractual arrangements could support the development of his manager and grow the interests of the farm business at the same time. Leigh says: <i>"You know....part of my definition of success as a farmer is that in five years-time this person will have moved several tiers in their understanding of just what farm management entails."</i></p> <p>Mark, the "second-in-charge" on the farm recognizes that he has been given many opportunities to build up his career on the farm. The opportunities to purchase cows and to build assets were key factors to provide him clearer and better career pathway options: <i>"I can see a career path in it. It's probably – realistically at the moment I'd struggle to go and buy my own farm. That's probably one big advantage of starting to buy calves and stuff. I'm getting a bit of equity behind my name so I'll be able to ponder that concept later on."</i> (Mark) The contractual employment arrangements developed for Leigh and the senior manager also form part of the career development of a senior manager in the dairy industry and also the formation of skills for this farm – but also for the dairy industry if Mark goes onto other farms.</p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Family	Lyndell and Rod Cope
Date reported	January 2010
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Documenting farm policies and procedures
Context	Lyndell and Rod dairy at Middle Tarwin in South Gippsland, milking 385 cows with help from two long term employees. They recognised they experienced immense value from having good employees and wanted to make sure they were equally good employers.
Link with project	Lyndell participated in People Focus (a precursor of PeopleGPS)
Actions taken	Documented job descriptions for all farm positions, using templates from <i>The People in Dairy</i> website. Uses <i>The People in Dairy</i> website regularly as the starting point for information or tools related to people management eg to look up changes in pay rates and workplace health and safety and follows links to other relevant websites. Also uses People Basics.
Impact	Enables her to quickly and easily stay up to date with changes in legislation. <i>"I can get the information I need without even knowing what organisation I'm looking for."</i>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Jan/Feb 2010



"One of the first things I did was document job descriptions for the positions on our farm. It makes you think about what you expect from employees and what they are capable of. It was really easy. I just saved the templates onto our computer and adapted the material to relate to our farm."

– Lyndell Cope

Family	Donna and Ray Graham and son Jason
Date reported	September 2009
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Documenting farm protocols + farm safety
Context	The Graham family dairy at Millaa Millaa in Far North Queensland, milking up to 900 cows. Jason returned to the family farm after working in the military and quickly discovered the defence force approach to managing people didn't work on the farm. He ended up with high staff turnover.
Link with project	Participated in a <i>The People in Dairy</i> workshop (pre-cursor for PeopleGPS)
Actions taken	Involves people in farm decisions through staff meetings and having input in developing farm operating manuals. Documented a range of farm protocols using templates on <i>The People in Dairy</i> website. Installed signage to improve farm safety. Set up on-farm training program, eg animal health procedures, heat detection and AI practices, cow nutrition and operating new machinery. Provides variation in job tasks. Runs 10-day fortnight roster so everyone has every second weekend and one day a week off
Impact	Toned down his approach, improved people management skills; <i>"Today I am far more accommodating than I was when I came back on the farm because I value good staff and recognise the importance of keeping them happy."</i> Reversed the high staff turnover: <i>"Our current team is the best we've had since I started back on the farm – they want to be here, they have the farm's best interest at heart, are here for the long term and are a pleasure to work with."</i>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Sep/Oct 2009

Family	Roma and Glenn Britnell
Date reported	November 2008
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Business coaching support in human resource management
Context	Roma and Glenn Britnell run a 1000 cow dairy farm business in south-west Victoria. The business has three farms a few kilometres apart. Five years ago they were struggling with people issues that were threatening to undermine their farm business. They struggled to keep these businesses working effectively using autonomous managers on each farm and they had high turnover.
Link with project	Enlisted a The People in Dairy trained farm adviser
Actions taken	They enlisted the support of a farm adviser who, through The People in Dairy adviser training had developed skills in human resource management. His support in this area in conjunction with his technical skills gave them so much confidence to make decisions about the farm business. They began running the farms collectively with a team approach.
Impact	This support has provided Roma and Glenn with efficiencies, sharing of resources – including their people – and support for younger team members who are developing their dairy farming skills. They became much more in tune with the people working in the business and their needs. They attended one of the first PeopleGPS programs run by The People in Dairy and developed a new set of skills themselves in people management that has allowed them to increase the performance of the farm business, provide them with a much better work life balance, and satisfaction that they are looking after their people a lot better. <i>“It’s great to be able to go to The People in Dairy website and access the information and templates which cover every aspect of employing staff in a farm business, as well as having the backup of people trained in employment and human resources.”</i>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Nov/Dec 2008 about their move to having employees rather than sharefarmers

Family	John and Kathy Dalton
Date reported	May-June 2009
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Employment contracts and remuneration packages
Context	John and Kathy Dalton dairy near Warrnambool in Western Victoria. They milk 600 cow with the help of three staff.
Link with project	Participated in People Focus discussion group in 2008 (precursor for PeopleGPS)
Actions taken	Refined staff contracts, employment conditions and remuneration packages using resources on The People in Dairy website. Worked through health and safety section of The People in Dairy website to ensure their operation met legal obligations to staff.
Impact	<i>“The People in Dairy website is the best I’ve seen for accessing information to help employers work through all aspects of employing staff. In that past we faced real challenges in accessing all the information we needed but The People in Dairy brings it all together in one website. I’ve had people come and ask me how we did things but now I tell them to go to the website, work through the various topics and download the templates which they can customise to fit their farming operations. If they work through The People in Dairy website they can be confident they’ll have everything covered.”</i>

Family	Peter and Sue*
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	Growing a good team
Context	Peter and Sue have been dairyfarming for over 30 years, together with their son for over a decade, and have recently welcomed their daughter-in-law into the family business. 1000 cows, 2700 acres. There has been rapid expansion of the farm over the past 8 years, with a recent drop back to a more sustainable number of cows.
Link with project	Several family members, together with key staff, attended a The People in Dairy Large Herds Business Retreat.
Actions taken	<p>Peter and Sue were looking to hone their skills and try and learn more things to improve their staff management. The Large Herds Business Retreat provided an opportunity to interact with other farmers and find out how others are running their businesses. It was also a chance to get away with some key staff, and build the team. Over the years, Peter and Sue have trialled a number of initiatives to improve staff retention and the smooth running of the farm. These include fortnightly meetings, a dairy in the office, different rosters, an alcohol/ drugs policy and improved staff selection processes (“trying to pick people and personality types that are suited to the business, and also to the culture”). Looking after the well-being of their staff is a key focus in all that they do.</p> <p><i>“We’ve tried more work, less work, having them live here, not live here; and we’ve come to a situation of about 44 hours is a sustainable level that we feel they can still do their job – not burn out in six months and move on – and be able to have a lifestyle as well. When someone else offers them money it’s usually a figure, but they don’t realise that they’re on duty after hours as well. When our staff go home they’re not called in at all.”</i></p>
Impact	<p><i>“I don’t think we do too bad a job of managing our staff in general. Obviously, there’s things we can tighten up on and improve, but I think, generally, we manage to maintain reasonable staff.</i></p> <p><i>[The Large Herds Business Retreat]... did make us pretty happy with what we were doing too... It was more of an affirmation of what – that we were on the right track, I think. The guys – the presenters – said that to us as well.”</i></p> <p>Peter and Sue would like to see greater emphasis on helping staff understand their pay rates and conditions. They have lost good staff to other opportunities, where staff were offered 10-20% more pay but were expected to work 70-80 hours a week (compared to their roster of 44 hours per week). Peter and Sue will continue to grow their team with an emphasis on building a good culture and offering a decent work-life balance for the staff and the owners.</p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from The People in Dairy program team

Family	Lisa and Malcolm
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Leanne Bunn
Topic	Managing Human Resources
Context	Lisa and husband Malcolm farm at Glengarry. Lisa was enrolled in Manage Human Resources, an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture unit with NCDEA. The unit was delivered by Leanne Bunn on 5 Tuesdays, to participants at campuses in Terang, Shepparton and Leongatha. Some participants also joined the group from their home offices (or kitchens!).
Link with project	Lisa had previously completed PeopleGPS which is at Diploma level. Manage HR also makes extensive use of The People in Dairy website and many of the templates are utilised.
Actions taken	Lisa employs a trainee and has used The People in Dairy templates for job description, contracts, performance appraisals etc.
Impact	Using the templates and referring to the The People in Dairy website has increased Lisa’s confidence in employing staff. She believes there is greater clarity of roles and responsibilities because the templates and GPS and Manage HR courses trigger good discussions and open communication on farm. Her aim is to be an ‘employer of choice’ and retain staff long term.

Family	Jodie and Michael Connor
Date reported	March 2009
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Becoming an employer of choice
Context	Jodie and Michael Connor run a 1200 cow herd across two dairies on South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula. They employ a staff of 20 and are regularly approached by people wanting to work for them.
Link with project	Jodie participated in a People Focus discussion group and completed the Diploma HR run by NCDEA and presented by the <i>The People in Dairy</i> team.
Actions taken	Used templates on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website to develop customised documents for their farm business. Updated safety procedures after a People Focus discussion group meeting that dealt with employer's legal obligations in providing a safe working environment including providing all staff with motorbike helmets, installing reminder signs; and providing hats for sun protection.
Impact	<i>"When we started employing people there was nothing available to help us but the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website has a lot of information, documents, procedures and templates which are updated and constantly being improved. It's a great resource for anyone in the industry."</i>
Other notes	Article published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> Mar/Apr 2009

"The people-focussed discussion group: we're a group of dairy farmers who get together every three months. I've learnt a lot from other people's experiences, whether they are employing one person or 20."

– Jodie Connor



Family	Isaac Johnstone
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Making it Work
Context	Isaac Johnstone runs a 1000 cow corporate farm north of Warrnambool in Western Victoria. He has the responsibility of employing 6 staff for the farm which is owned by overseas investors. Being a corporate farm it is important that he gets compliance right and it is in his own interests that he has a stable and happy team.
Link with project	Isaac attended the diploma HRM dairy in 2010 and learned many aspects of team leadership, compliance and the fundamentals of what employees need in the workplace.
Actions taken	The skills he acquired during this program and the networks of people he has met have given him so much more confidence to manage his staff successfully. The farm has a very stable workforce and is beginning to reap the rewards from a long term investment in people.
Impact	The ability for Isaac to look up any details of engagement and to utilise his network have given him much more enthusiasm for the job and a sense of pride to belong to an organisation that prides in its people. In 2012, Isaac was runner-up employer of the year for the SW Dairy awards program.

Family	Bryan and Jo Dickson
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Tom Walsh
Topic	Engaging and Retaining Farm Managers
Context	Bryan and Jo Dickson purchased an out paddock but quickly decided that the only way for it to give them a return was to run it as a dairy farm. The old dairy was decommissioned and renovated and major infrastructure work was done. They were able to attract a couple from Northern Victoria to manage the farm but had no idea on the best way to engage them. To this end they obtained the help of farm advisers from The Vet Group to develop a management arrangement for the couple.
Link with project	Use of <i>The People in Dairy</i> website
Actions taken	With the help of <i>The People in Dairy</i> website templates a management agreement was put in place for the husband and an employment arrangement within the Pastoral Industry award done for the wife. Of more importance was the development of a document outlining the roles and responsibilities for the couple as well as work conditions and time off arrangements. Bryan and Jo were assisted in ensuring a reasonable weekly work load was in place and worked to combine some of the farm operations in with that of their home farm.
Impact	The farm was milking about 220 cows originally which was as many as any owner had milked on the 120 effective hectares. Currently the farm is milking 360 cows and managing to conserve a considerable amount of silage each spring. The original management agreement has been altered over the years but the basic approach of following <i>The People in Dairy</i> guidelines has always been maintained. The couple has been on the farm for 4 years now and are still happily engaged and productive employees.

Family	Bruce Grant
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Having a Benchmark
Context	Bruce Grant employs a farm manager for his investment dairy farm near Corowa on the Murray River. He engages a senior operations manager for the farm that milks a little over 1000 cows. Bruce has a great relationship with his manager however at the last performance management discussion they had, they were at odds as to what was a fair and reasonable salary for a manager in light of the influx of corporate farms and supposedly high salaries.
Link with project	Use of <i>The People in Dairy</i> website
Actions taken	Bruce was alerted to the industry benchmarks and guidelines for setting salaries for managers on the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website.
Impact	This resource was an important benchmark for he and his manager to come to an agreement on what was fair reward for his role. This has led to a continuing effective working relationship.

Family	Noel and Anne Campbell
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Staff retention; <i>The People in Dairy</i> tools such as Sharefarming agreement
Context	Noel and Ann Campbell dairy in West Gippsland and have employed staff for the past 22 years. Noel has a very good record for retaining staff. His herd manager recently moved on to a share-farming arrangement.
Link with project	Noel uses <i>The People in Dairy</i> website as his first port of call for people-related issues.
Actions taken	The share-farming agreement that they prepared recently was drawn up by a consultant but drew heavily upon the principles outlined on <i>The People in Dairy</i> website.
Impact	<i>"The People in Dairy website has been a valuable resource used repeatedly over the years".</i>
Other notes	Article appeared in the Sep/Oct 2012 issue of <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> magazine.

Family	Kay and David Lewis*
Date reported	April 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Exploitation of share farmers
Context	In 2008-09 Kay Lewis and her partner David were share farming in south west Vic. They had been there 2 years but were making no progress despite working long hours. In the second year, their total taxable income was \$11,000 which included some off- farm income of Kay's. They decided to move on and not long after they moved, they received a bill for several thousand dollars for fertiliser that was applied the week before they left. This was devastating for them as they had no money and a young family. David had decided it was not worth it to be dairy farming so had found a job driving trucks.
Link with project	Kay was aware of the <i>The People in Dairy</i> program and contacted an adviser about her share farming contract and the dilemma they faced. They were referred to Jennie Corkhill, the IR lawyer who has worked with <i>The People in Dairy</i> developing the resources on the website, as private clients.
Actions taken	Jennie Corkhill examined the share farming agreement and found that it had been set up using an old agreement produced by the VFF but with changes that suited the farm owner. Her advice was to send a letter to the owner informing him of the significant errors and biases in the contract and that not only was the share farmer not liable for the fertiliser bill, but that if they were to act to pursue it any further that there would be a demand for unpaid wages, superannuation, annual leave loading and so on. Kay and David did not wish to pursue their former employer for these unpaid dues and likewise the owner took no further action.
Impact	This is unfortunately not an isolated case. However the facility provided by <i>The People in Dairy</i> website to download share farm agreement checklists and to seek advice about share farming agreements means that individuals and industry are better prepared and informed to avoid such situations in the future.
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Family	Jan Raleigh and Phillip Stasiw
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Business Transition
Context	Jan Raleigh farms 200 cows on a very picturesque farm in south west Victoria near Timboon. She took the farm over from her parents in the early 80's and has one of the highest ranked Aussie Red herds in Australia. Jan prides in her farm but in recent years, the constant demands of farming have been catching up with her. She has engaged part time workers for several years but finally knew the time would come where she would need a longer term full time employee. She engaged the services of her farm consultant who specialises in HRM, to look at her options and to do the recruiting for her. After an exhaustive and patient search, a young farmer Phil Stasiw was appointed. Philip was given an opportunity after 12 months to buy into the herd and to rear a few extra calves.
Link with project	The availability of a consultant with HRM skills and the <i>The People in Dairy</i> website have given Jan so much more confidence to step down this pathway and to keep her farm in dairying.
Actions taken	Now two years into the agreement, Philip is committed to making a go of farming Aussie Reds. Jan has committed to replacing the old farm house with a new home for Philip and his family to live in.
Impact	Jan is adamant that if she had continued down the pathway of employing casual staff she would probably have been forced to eventually sell the cows and retire. With Philip destined to ultimately take over as a share farmer has given Jan an opportunity to slowly wind back her physical involvement in the farm and to provide a great opportunity for succession for Phillip.

Family	Hans van Wees
Date reported	September 2011
Reporter	Lee-Ann Monks
Topic	Workplace safety
Context	Hans van Wees sharefarms at Tinamba, Gippsland, milking 700 cows and employing two full time and two part time staff.
Link with project	Had an independent farm safety audit done through a Murray Goulburn service that was developed using resources from The People in Dairy and WorkSafe.
Actions taken	The audit identified a number of areas improvement that Hans implemented, eg setting up the chemical storage area to contain spills and leaks, upgrading the PTs and having machinery professionally serviced by qualified mechanics. Also plan to install a road underpass to reduce risk associated with moving cows on road.
Impact	Greater confidence the farm is a safe workplace.
Other notes	Article was published in <i>The Australian Dairyfarmer</i> magazine Sep-Oct 2011

Corporate farm	Cossack Holdings
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Chris Hibburt
Topic	Putting People's Needs First
Context	In 1995, four investors from Timboon, south west Victoria, purchased a dairy farm milking 200 cows. Although they worked in the industry they were not dairy farmers and were not interested to run the farm themselves. They created a company Cossack Holdings which was the business structure that owned and operated the farm. They grew the farm employing a manger and all the staff, and within 3 years were milking 500 cows leasing 200 acres next door. The farm had a small 50 unit rotary dairy that they needed to extend out so their cows could fit on the platform. Over the next few years they continued to grow the business but continually ran into problems with staff retention. There was not enough consideration of the needs of the staff and the resources available on the farm, especially the dairy, were inadequate for what they were trying to achieve. The profitability was not there and the future looked grim.
Link with project	Two of the owners completed the Diploma HRM Dairy and the operations manager and MD attended a Large Herds Business Retreat in Melbourne.
Actions taken	They eventually decided that the farm either was to be sold or they would have to reinvest in it by building a new dairy and try to get a stable team to run the farm. A new dairy was commissioned. Their development of HRM skills and understanding the needs of employees has led them to have an excellent record in staff retention and profitability, the farm rating high in benchmark achievement for profitability.
Impact	Today they milk 1100 cows, there are two employees who have reached 10 years on the farm and 3 who have been there for nearly 5 years. The stability this offers has provided countless reward in better performance and minimal wastage on the farm. The owners see no need to sell the farm today given that its performance would be difficult to beat if they were to invest the money elsewhere.



"It's so much easier and more profitable to run your farm when you set it up to be people friendly."

– Merlin Bradley

Service business	Murray Whiting
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Pauline Brightling
Topic	Professional Support
Context	Murray Whiting is an accountant at Sinnott's Accounting firm in Warrnambool which services a significant dairy farm client base. They have always been asked questions by their clients in relation to IR laws for dairy farm employees but other than government web sites, in the past had limited resources to offer their clients in this area.
Link with project	Since they became aware of the The People in Dairy website, the firm has been able to utilise it increasingly to assist their farmers to be compliant and to improve the engagement process. In May 2012, a group of 5 from the firm attended an accountant update in Warrnambool run by the The People in Dairy with Jennie Corkhill, an IR lawyer who has developed much of the content on the website. That workshop helped them to understand much more of the detail of the website and the laws around IR for farm workers.
Actions taken	Today, it is standard practice for Sinnott's to roll out employment contracts and Individual Flexibility Agreements for their employees. They also know a lot more about what is available to support employer – employee relationships. In August 2012 they held a workshop for a number of their clients that was facilitated by Chris Hibburt to give their clients an opportunity to learn more about compliance and engagement.
Impact	For them, having a more informed clientele was a great way to strengthen the relationship but more importantly to assist them in having robust compliant businesses.

Service business	The Vet Group
Date reported	March 2012
Reporter	Pauline Brightling
Topic	A business model
Context	The Vet Group at Timboon, Allansford and Wollaston in Warrnambool, services 600 dairy farm businesses predominately in south west Vic. They have a number of staff who offer farm advisory services at varying technical and business levels in the business.
Link with project	Since 2008, when the Diploma HRM (Dairy) commenced, 5 of the staff have completed the diploma. Chris Hibburt and Tom Walsh in their capacity as advisers to dairy farm businesses, now specialize in the area of HRM. The People in Dairy website is used extensively by advisers within the business to support their role in HRM advice to farmers.
Actions taken	The Vet Group has developed a recruitment service that provides a holistic approach to recruiting. The real challenge faced by farm businesses – whether they are having retention problems or just growing – is that they need to make sure they are realistic about what they have to offer and what it will cost. Starting out on the right foot is an excellent way to proceed. This gives their clients an opportunity to have a strong people focus that not only rewards the people employed by the farm business but also those who own it, such that they can focus on a balanced people approach.
Impact	The Vet Group principals believe that their business has moved to a new level of service offered by focusing on the people elements of dairy advisory work. The amount of work they do in this area has increased five-fold from 2006 to 2012 with an estimated additional \$50,000 revenue from people work.

Service business	Jol Dutton
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Leanne Bunn
Topic	Signposting on succession
Context	Jol is a field officer with Murray Goulburn Co-op, based at Leongatha.
Link with project	Jol had just attended the Planning for the Future workshop as part of the Diploma HRM. With the three days fresh in his mind, he felt much better equipped to handle a milk price discussion with a supplier, which quickly turned to issues around succession planning.
Actions taken	Jol was able to direct the farmers to <i>The People in Dairy</i> website and the Planning for the Future module. He was also able to suggest how other experts could assist with further discussions and decision making.
Impact	Jol commented that he was far more comfortable with these types of discussions because of the practical tips, tools and stories he'd been exposed to during the Diploma HRM. He was actually pretty excited when he phoned to tell me about it. The farmer was also more prepared to continue exploring his options for the future, rather than put them on the back burner or perhaps ignore them for now.

Farm consultant	Charlie*
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	Developing new advisory skills
Context	Charlie is a farm consultant with over twenty years experience in the dairy industry. There are two consulting partners in their business. They have a large client list and the interaction with their clients varies – for some it is frequently, and for others they are called in at times of significant change in the farm business such as a family member returning to the farm, or purchasing the property next door. The farm sizes that they work with varies from 60- 1500 cows, with the average size being 300 cows.
Link with project	Charlie completed the <i>The People in Dairy</i> HR diploma several years ago. He chose to do it to “have a broader range of skills and experience to better service clients” as well as provide a professional development opportunity. “I needed to do it to be able maintain relevance for my clients in the work today and into the future.”
Actions taken	Charlie has worked with a number of farms around issues of people management. Often, the need to find a new staff member has been the opportunity to engage the farmer with the broader practices and principles of <i>The People in Dairy</i> .
Impact (in Charlie's words)	<p><i>The tools and resources that are made available – and it's not so much in the diploma but you become more aware of by doing the diploma, that they're there on <i>The People in Dairy</i> website, has certainly provided more structure in the way that provides services around human resource management. Don't know if it's different but I think it's more structured.</i></p> <p><i>I guess I'm confident in working with clients and again, clients that are keen to implement change. So I guess... I'm not being a change agent, if you like, for the business. Someone else in the business whether it be Mum, Dad, the manager is triggering we need change here. Once they've triggered that change or that's what we need or want then I'm happy to go through the door.</i></p> <p><i>[As an example] We did a – the precursor [pilot] of a PeopleGPS course two and half or three years ago. One of my very keen clients there, as a farm manager, was keen to implement change across his business and starting with just systems. Operations managing and things like that, a long term approach at change. So we started right at the basics and basically went through and – he drove it all. I just helped along the way and restructured the way they did everything, the way they engaged people, the way they monitored performance or did performance appraisals and implemented all that over a period of time. It created a great amount of upheaval in that business whereas really the entire workforce that was there nearly got chucked over in a 12 or 18 month period, but now three or four years down the track – three I suppose – they've got much better systems in place and their whole approach to human resource management is improving and that's left them in a better position... I reckon having them involved in the PeopleGPS course was the trigger. They wanted to do something, starting to talk about how you could go about change was the fuel to the fire and then being there in a supportive role, if you like... has delivered change on that farm”.</i></p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from <i>The People in Dairy</i> program team

Farm consultant	Barry*
Date reported	October 2012
Reporter	Anne Crawford
Topic	Building the toolkit
Context	Barry is a farm consultant who has been working with dairy farmers for almost 20 years. Five years ago he established his own consultancy business together with another adviser, with a specific focus on farm business management. Most commonly their clients have 400-800 cow dairy farms. Their approach is to provide a 'package' to their farmers, which involves eight visits per year, so they have close contact with them and their farm businesses.
Link with project	Barry completed the The People in Dairy HR Diploma several years ago.
Actions taken	Barry and his business partner identified that they didn't have a broad understanding of HR management, and wanted to add it to their 'tool box'. This would allow them to provide a more comprehensive service when advising their farmer clients. Barry enrolled in the HR Diploma in order to develop those skills. <i>"We chose to do that simply because farmers had issues with employment that we need to deal with."</i> From Barry's perspective, it was important to keep developing the business in order to take their farmers to the next level, once they had sorted out the productivity issues and implemented benchmarking. Retention is a big issue on many farms and a key area of focus. <i>"It's really about helping them manage their business better and a lot of the time they can be very good at the productivity things on the farm, but if they are not retaining people and people aren't happy we need to somehow fix that because it's a cost to them."</i>
Impact (in Barry's words)	<p><i>"The tools that we now have, have changed the way we approach the topic. I suppose in the past we would offer broad brush solutions, but there are no techniques or tools the farmer could use as such to help them sort their problems out. So now we can help them with that if that makes sense.</i></p> <p><i>I think the most important thing is introducing the topic and explaining how important it is so that they start to value the topic if you like and understand how important that communication is from a retention point of view. Whenever you talk to staff who are happy they are informed and they are given responsibility and it's helping people see that. As a farmer you can go and do that job but until you give someone responsibility they are not going to feel as fulfilled in their role.</i></p> <p><i>...it's helping them understand that without the people they don't have the business they've got because they simply can't do it all themselves. It's really interesting the ones who value staff tend to have that better team and better culture, higher retention rates, less turnover, all of those things.</i></p> <p><i>So as I say, it's helping people understand that firstly, and then saying, well how are we going to fix this? Where do we begin? Because it's so big and broad we can't just turn up and say, let's fix the culture here. It's the little things, code of conduct and setting systems and procedures and whatever. It's making a start at some point.</i></p> <p><i>...It's the finer detail of the industrial relations law that I will probably never know but I am confident enough that what I find fantastic is if Jenny Corkhill was there and available, I've rung her. When I'm in a real spot with a client and it's urgent, I just ring her and she has always given me great advice.</i></p>
Other notes	*Not real names. Information available from The People in Dairy program team



**2013 APEN Award
for Excellence in Extension
by an**

Experienced Professional

awarded to

**Pauline Brightling &
The People in Dairy Core
Group team**

for their contribution to extension through Dairy Australia's
The People in Dairy program.

Austin McLennan
APEN President

Warren Hunt
APEN MC and Selection Committee
27 August 2013

2013 APEN Award for Excellence in Extension by an Experienced Professional

Pauline Brightling &
The People in Dairy Core Group team

for their contribution to extension through Dairy Australia's
The People in Dairy program.

Pauline Brightling and The People in Dairy core group team demonstrated effectively, many spheres of extension effort. The People in Dairy program displayed its functions in delivering programmed technically focused learning activities, business problem solving retreats, and even addressed certain psycho-social issues.

The People in Dairy program also enhanced the adult learning and education capacity of those in industry engaged with farmers. Further developing E-extension and online web capabilities of Dairy Australia were also a key feature of the program.

The APEN award judges commend Pauline and the core group of The People in Dairy program for its cross-agency coordination and management, and overall industry-wide function.