My experiences as a dairy farm employee

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Background

- From Windgap, Co. Kilkenny
- Dairying at home
- Worked on the buildings (Dublin, Australia)

- Wanted to be a dairy farmer
- Travelled to NZ - 7 years experience (3 farms)
- Currently on dairy farm in Co. Galway

Starting out
What I look for in an employer….

- Progression up the ranks
- Potential salary increases
- Opportunities on farm
  - Ownership of stock
  - Development of farm
- Trust
- Employer with people skills
- Well managed and nice farm
- Employer who spends time on employing the right person

Skills
How I developed ….

- Time with owner
- Knew little about grass
  - Weekly walk with owner
- Field days/discussion group
- Drive a bike
- Business skills with owner
- Day courses (level1 to 6)

Simple farming system
What worked for me….

- Fixed routine each day
- Limited batches of stock
- Limited machinery work
- Farm transport provided
- Peak workload planned eg calf rearer

Time management
What worked for me….

- Farms must be rostered
  - Set days off
  - workload is planned
- Easy to swap days on roster (flexibility)
- Different farms have different rosters
- Plenty of time off
  - second half of the year

Pay
My experiences…..

- Paid on time
- Automatic transfer of payment
- Pay increases with responsibility
- Work gear provided
- Perk – freezer half full of beef
- House provided

Communication
What worked for me….

- Monthly meetings
  - Breakfast meetings
- Phone – owner available and appreciative
- Jointly making decisions
- Notice boards – weekly plan, lists
- Farm map – can be written on
- Production/financial data on farm

Work life balance

- House on farm
- 8/9 hour milking interval
- Sat/Sun – basic jobs only
- Evenings to yourself
- Flexible breakfast/lunch
- Football Wed/Sun mornings

Great nightlife in Christchurch

My Conclusion

- **I learned a lot**
  - From farmers
  - It was my university
- **Opportunities**
  - Allowed me to progress
- **My Future**
  - Want to dairy farm myself
  - Share my knowledge and skills with others

Thank you