

Press Release

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Get the most from your staff at the Dairy Show

Good labour management will be tackled head on at this year's Dairy Show, with seminars targeted at helping farmers get the best results when recruiting and retaining staff.

No business can function without staff, whether they are family members or outside employees, so it's vitally important to look after them and help them continue to develop professionally, says Alan Lyons, head of shows. "For the dairy industry to thrive in the future, there needs to be some serious attention paid to recruiting, retaining and training employees.

"That's why the biggest event in the industry is putting emphasis on how to employ staff, how to have a good professional relationship with them and what needs to be done to help them and your business continue to develop."

This year's key note speaker, Paul Harris at Real Success, will be offering his top tips on how to recruit and retain staff.

"Do farmers really know the cost of getting recruitment and staffing wrong," he questions. "There are shocking hidden costs of poor recruitment. Many farmers simply don't know how much revenue is slipping out of their business in this way as it's not always visible or easy to quantify."

So what should producers do to make staffing less of a stress and more of an asset?

According to Mr Harris, there are four stages to getting staffing right:

1 – Recruit – The first stage is recruiting the right people the right way. "Many farmers might have a chat and a coffee with the prospective employee, show them around the farm and then offer them the job. We need to be far more diligent in our approach to interviews," he says.

First impressions work both ways. The interviewee needs to get a good impression of the farm. How tidy is it? Were you on time for the interview? Be professional and interview properly.

2 – Engage – "As an employer you need to understand different people and the science around that, so use profiling," he advises. Profiling is a detailed assessment of strengths,

weaknesses, reactions to different situations and of general character. “If you profile people at the recruitment stage, you’ll know how well they’re likely to fit into your team and most importantly, how to communicate with them. Often staff leave jobs because of the way they are spoken to more than anything else.”

3 – Align your goals – People are all motivated differently but you need to align your team behind you so you’re trying to achieve the same thing. “Regular reviews with your staff are critical here.”

4 – Develop leaders of the future - Leaders are made and not born, says Mr Harris. “As an industry we need to train employers on how to train their staff. It’s about upskilling in terms of leadership and management - herd management is an important part of training, but as much time should be spent developing our people as our herds.”

The scientific developments for dairy are incredible, with some amazing technological advances, but staff development hasn’t moved forward for the past 20 years, he adds. “One reason for this may be the number of family farms that haven’t needed to take on outside staff. But the moment you do, things become very different.”

The industry is waking up to the importance of getting staffing right, says Mr Harris. “We want to attract young people but we have to treat recruitment and development of staff more seriously and respond to the changing needs of the workforce.”

- The Dairy Show will be held on 3 October at the Royal Bath & West Showground. Schedules for show classes are available online, and advance saver tickets can be purchased from www.bathandwest.com.
- The Dairy Show is registered with Dairy Pro and current members and those who join at the event will get their attendance registered on their personal development record and receive 2 Dairy Pro points.

About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

- Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
- Technical events and Seminars
- Practical farming advice and conferences
- Countryside Education
- Diversification advice for farmers
- Education for children
- A market place for countryside products
- Plus all the events run by the Society and Bath & West Enterprises Ltd.

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