

## Dairy Producer

### Position Description

A dairy producer is involved in a wide range of activities, with the primary objective of producing high quality milk. Daily tasks include chores such as feeding the herd, animal health, raising quality forages, milking, cleaning barns and making mating decisions for genetic progress.

Taking care of animals is a priority, as the cows are the most important component of a dairy farm. Farmers devote special attention to their cows' health and well-being. They are also responsible for accounting and managing employees.

### Education Requirements

- Formal education beyond a high school diploma will help prepare them to successfully manage a business but is not required.
- A bachelor's degree with emphasis for course work in dairy science and business management is one path some take to prepare to manage a dairy farm.
- Some colleges offer one to two-year short course programs to help individuals learn valuable technical skills and gain experience.

### Helpful Skill Set

- Physically strong with stamina.
- Able to diagnose and treat common ailments that affect dairy cows, artificial insemination, understanding the mechanics of the milking system and various farm equipment, understanding crops and forage production, accounting, computer skills and an in-depth knowledge of genetics.
- Leadership skills are key to helping grow the business and manage employees.
- Accurate record keeping is needed to know current profitability and the cost of production.
- Good verbal communication skills.

### Network Development

- Participate in extension programs, breed associations, state dairy associations, cooperative and processor meetings.
- Build relationships with A.I. companies, nutritionists, veterinarians, dairy specialists and milking equipment companies.
- Attend events like the Young Dairy Leaders Institute for valuable learning experiences.

### Work Experience

- Seek internships on various farms.
- Work for other farms to gain valuable experiences and learn from others.
- Continue education to keep current with labor and tax laws, Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) program standards etc.
- Shadow producers in the industry to gain on-farm knowledge.

### Keywords

dairy farm, manager, animal health, genetics, crops, milking, feeding, nutrition

