

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Dairy Cattle Farming is the largest employing industry in the region, employing nearly 10,000 people. Industry is developing their workforce with initiatives such as Get Kiwis On Farm, and it is expanding into different social media platforms to attract people to the sector.

Historically the industry has had a high reliance on migrant labour, with the wider Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry having 10 percent of jobs held by migrants. Dairy Cattle Farming specifically makes up 15 percent of all migrants on Employer Assisted Temporary Work visas, with a higher proportion of higher skilled visas such as Farm Managers.

Currently the undersupply of workers is affecting a range of occupations across the region. This includes Dairy Cattle farmers (specifically Dairy Farm Assistant Managers, Dairy Farm Managers, and Dairy Herd Managers), and is also affecting Beef Cattle farmers. If the undersupply continues it will have significant roll on affects for both the region and nationally.

The Dairy industry in Waikato is a key factor in the delivery of the 'Fit for a Better World roadmap - Accelerating the Recovery from COVID-19'. In particular, increasing primary industry export earnings, as Dairy exports account for 60 percent of Waikato's exports and 20 percent of NZ's total exports.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



96% the growth in the number of Dairy Cattle Farmers on Employer Assisted Temporary Work visas from June 2020 to June 2021 (an increase of 210 people). This role is classified in the Manager occupation group.

-24% the decrease in the number of Dairy Cattle Farmer Workers on Employer Assisted Temporary Work visas from June 2020 to June 2021 (a decrease of 110 people). This role is classified in the Labourers occupation group.
(Source: Immigration NZ, EATW visas)



46% of the 265 Waikato Farmers surveyed by Dairy NZ in March said that their **current team is capable of delivering the needs of their business**, and that they are not short-staffed.

23% of that same cohort surveyed said that their **current team is not capable and that they are short-staffed.**

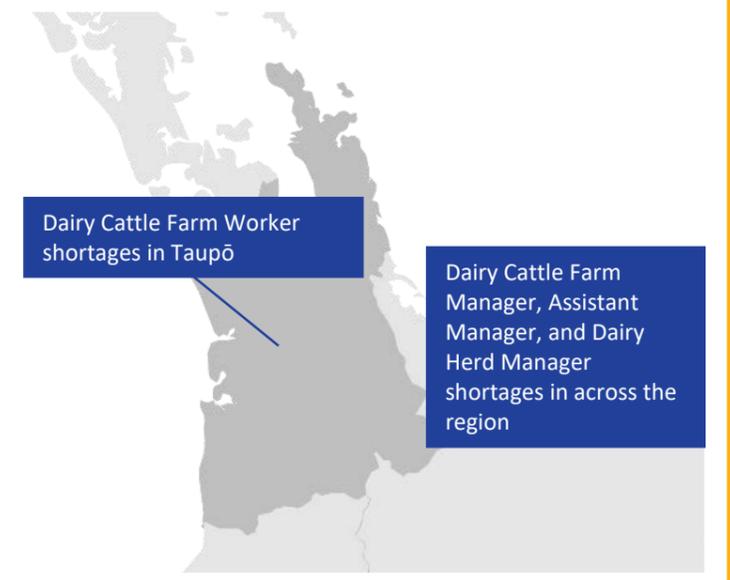
TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- The Waikato iRSLG is supporting Federated Farmers to investigate ways to increase the attractiveness of pathways into the primary sector** by building on the success of the Get Kiwis On Farm program. The programme attracted approximately 100 placements in the Waikato last year. With ongoing support from MSD the programme is being expanded to include more placements. The Dairy Industry is evolving and there is an emerging need for higher levels of production-oriented skills including whole farm systems; information management; resource use; financial efficiency; soft skills; and managing local and migrant staff and contractors including support industries such as farm advisory.
- Offering retraining to people who are recently unemployed into quality primary sector jobs**, with a focus on women and Māori who are currently under represented in the sector. This will assist with meeting changing demands in the sector. There is increasing need for people with product skills, along with cultural knowledge and language skills needed in emerging markets.
- There is increasing focus on connecting rural New Zealanders.** Expanding the existing digital infrastructure will assist with innovation, best practice, and maintaining wellbeing. This will help with technology adoption and upskilling for workforce development.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- The region is not currently training enough people to meet the demand, particularly for roles such as Dairy Farm Manager.** This role requires a mix of Level 4 and 5 qualifications but few from the Waikato are training up to that level. The majority of students stop at Level 3, which is considered 'low skill'. The RSLG is interested in understanding why this is, what the barrier is, and what would encourage learners or employers to carry on in higher proportions.
- Farm owners are struggling to balance emerging priorities for the future against maintaining their business resilience now.** The sector is being encouraged to prepare for the future with priorities such as climate change adaptation, managing disruption to supply chains, and responding to changing consumer preferences. However, resources are limited and there are concerns that businesses will struggle to continue to operate as new requirements are introduced.
- Industry Partners within the sector are working together to better understand who their mutual members are.** This will identify opportunities for collaboration and strengthen relationships across the sector. Iwi and Māori Primary Sector employers across the region will play a significant role in promoting the sector internationally.

THE WAIKATO REGION



OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Manufacturing, Engineering, and Logistics
- Construction and infrastructure
- Primary sector
- Transition to the permanent RSLGs