

Submitter information

Please provide your name and phone number, and preferred email address for contact if it is different from the one used to send this form:

s 9(2)(g)(i), s 9(2)(a)

In what capacity are you providing feedback?

e.g. on behalf of: your company, the company you work for, an industry organisation, a union, a licensed immigration adviser etc.

Current farm operations manager and future farm owner

If you are representing a company or group, what is the name of that group?

What industry or industries does that group work in?

Dairy Industry

In your company or industry, what are the most common occupations for migrant workers?

Assistant herd managers, Herd managers, 2lc

What visa categories are commonly used by those workers?

I.e. resident visa, Essential Skills work visa, Work-to-Residence work visa (under the Talent or Long Term Skill Shortage List categories), Post-Study work visa (open or employer assisted), open work visa.

Open work visa, temporary work visa

Only answer the following questions if you directly employ migrant workers:

How many migrant workers do you currently employ? (Refer to the visa categories in the question above)

17

Have you supported an Essential Skills visa application for any of these workers?

Yes 1

Using wage or salary information to help determine skill level and access to Essential Skills migrants

Proposal 1: Introduction of remuneration thresholds to determine skill levels and associated visa conditions for Essential Skills visas

Consider the proposal of aligning the remuneration thresholds for the Essential Skills visa with the remuneration thresholds for the Skilled Migrant Category.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from defining lower-, mid- and higher-skilled Essential Skills migrants in this way?

Give details of the occupations or sectors and wage or salary levels you are thinking of.

Dairy Sector

Assistant herd manager packages start \$46,000 (lower)

Herd Managers \$50,000-\$60,000 (mid)

2lc \$55,000-\$75,000 (higher skilled)

Farm Managers \$75,000 + (higher skilled)

I see this will create issues and expectations around job titles and salaries within the dairy industry, larger scale operators will be able to compete as they have scale to enable larger positions that are higher paid, Smaller NZ owned farms would struggle to employ skilled migrants and New Zealanders to fill gaps within their businesses if they cannot afford to pay the same rates. It will drive labour costs up across the whole industry as these figures will be seen by all as the levels required and hence reducing profitability and sustainability of the industry.

Reinforcing the temporary nature of the Essential Skills visa and managing the settlement expectations of temporary migrants

Proposal 2a: Introduction of a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option of a three years for a maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from the proposed maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

In relation to the dairy industry, three years is a short time for a new employee to get up to speed and progress through the industry, If after 3 years the employee is then required to leave the country the employer then will need to hire a new employee

Given the lack of quality New Zealand applicants to jobs advertised in the dairy industry in Canterbury in particular (in past 3 years I have only had 5 New Zealanders reach the interview stage for 27 roles advertised, and have employed 3 of these) this will result in a lower skilled workforce particularly in the herd manager, 2IC , and farm management roles in the future. This will damage the development pathway created for both New Zealanders and migrants because as an industry if we cannot find suitably qualified people to fulfil the roles we will need to change our business structure around employee availability and hence the intermediate positions will reduce, this would be detrimental to both the New Zealand dairy industry and those who work within it as the progression pathway would have a large gap within it.

I agree that having migrants working long term with no way to residency isn't a good outcome currently, I think a better approach would be a maximum of 3 year visa if they have not undergone and passed some relevant training papers in New Zealand to improve their skills such as Ag ITO. This will benefit these training organisations by having a larger number of students enrolled and hence can offer higher levels of training which benefit New Zealanders enrolled and the industry as a whole by increasing the skill level of the entire workforce.

Proposal 2b: Introduction of stand down period for lower-skilled Essential Skills migrants

Consider the option for a year-long stand down period following the maximum duration for lower-skilled Essential Skills visas.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

In relation to dairy from discussions with my employees who are migrants, if there is a maximum duration they can stay in NZ with a stand down period then they are likely to consider other countries such as Canada which are more favourable to them long term. It costs them a significant amount to move to NZ and hence a 3 year term with a 1 year stand down period may result in lower quality migrants as the better ones will look elsewhere. Once the migrants have left NZ for the year they are unlikely to return and hence we lose valuable employees who could contribute to the dairy industry.

Seven of my current employees who have progressed in the higher skilled roles of 2IC and Farm manager roles have been employed in NZ for 4-6 years, and hence they would no longer be available in the future under this proposed change. There is simply not enough New Zealand people wanting to work in the industry and grow within it to fulfil these roles.

If the 3 year proposal is adopted I think it would be preferred from both and employers and employees point of view to issue a 3 year visa rather than the current 1 year visas. The current 1 year term adds stress to employees and employers by creating uncertainty. It creates a significant amount of paper work and cost which adds no value to the business or industry.

Proposal 3: Require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the partners of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

In relation to dairy, when migrants decide to bring their families to NZ I see a number of changes occur which benefit NZ.

Their children enrol in our schools which ensure New Zealand children have access to schools in rural areas that would potentially not have enough students without these migrants.

They send less money back home and hence spend more in NZ which is good for support businesses locally.

They are more productive at work and settled which leads to them staying in the industry and progressing which is good for business performance.

Proposal 4: Require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right

Consider the proposal to require the children of lower-skilled Essential Skills visa holders to meet the requirements for a visa in their own right.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these proposed changes?

Give details of the occupations and industries you are thinking of.

Same as the previous answer

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Reinforce that Essential Skills visas should only be granted for the period for which the employment is offered

Proposal 5: Make it explicit how the 'period of employment' condition applies to seasonal work

Consider the option to reinforce that Essential Skills visas for seasonal work are only for the length of the season and that the offer of employment must match the length of the season.

What impacts or implications do you foresee from these options?

Give details of the occupations or sectors you think are likely to be affected.

Good idea assuming the length of the season can easily be defined to give certainties to both employers and employees. Eg ag Contractors silage season may start or finish late depending on the season due to the weather similar to the ski seasons.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

Are there any seasonal occupations that should be added or removed from this list? Why?

Harvest industries that rely on high levels of labour for short period of time to harvest the crops eg orchards, arable farmers etc.

Consider the list of seasonal occupations being considered.

If you employ seasonal staff, or represent a sector with seasonal staff:

- **What are the occupations of the seasonal staff within the sector that you are commenting on?**
- **For each of the occupations that you have identified, what is the typical period that you require seasonal staff to cover (e.g the peak of the season)?**

N/A