

Submission to government on proposed changes to the Essential Skills Visa.

Submitted by Roto Dairies Ltd, Jenelle Green, Director, Sth Wairarapa.

**Background**

Milking cows – 450  
KG/MS – 162,000  
Years in industry – 20 years  
Position – Family farm/Sharemilker  
Staff – 3

9(2)(a)

Both of the visas we have applied for at the moment are renewals of existing visas.

In order for us to have an Essential Skills Visa approved we are required to advertise the position ourselves and list the job with Work and Income to ensure that there are no suitable NZ workers available.

Our business has followed this process and we received 24 applicants and have provided you with a breakdown of why the applicants were not suitable for the position. **Please note the number of applicants that were from overseas.**

No experience – 3

Overseas – 15

Criminal history – 1

Looking for couple position – 3

Instability in job history – 1

Overqualified – 1

Work and income advised us that they had no suitable applicants for the job also.

The new proposed changes that you are consulting on implementing are very frustrating for us as farmers. You are creating uncertainty for us and increasing the stress that's involved with farming and the shortage of good people to fill these positions.

Having to re-apply every season for our staff's visas is stressful for all involved. The time and money that we implement into training our Phillipine staff relieves pressure from my husband in knowing that the farm will be running efficiently and being productive.

From our experience in the past the farm assistants that we have hired and have spent time training have walked out during our calving months which is our busiest time of the season. We have to carry on and my husband ends up doing 14 hour days/7 days a week to get the job done.

We have in the past hired New Zealanders for the farm assistant positions on our farm which have cost us as a business financially.

We made the decision about 2 years ago that if there were no suitable applicants that provided us with the work ethic and experience we needed, that we would not employ anyone local if they were not suitable and we would go through the hassle and tedious process with Immigration NZ to get a suitable applicant.

## Why you ask?????

### Example 1

9(2)(a)



### Example 2

9(2)(a)



### Example 3

9(2)(a)



### Example 4

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Any job vacancy that we have is advertised on the Farmsource website. As part of the hiring process for our business if we are interested in an interview with you based on your CV I ask that you complete a Dairy NZ application form, which in any job you would need to complete. I received 14 applications for the position and sent the application form to be completed to the applicants that had applied and I received 1 application form back. Challenges and lack of work ethic are already highlighted if applicants wont complete documentation to apply for the position. Just another example of why we chose to start employing overseas staff.

### **Example 5**

The housing shortage for New Zealanders is not effected by us hiring immigrant staff as we provide them homes to live in. To be honest we would love for the staff that we have hired in the past to rent there own homes. The damage and filth that I have had to clean up should not have to be done by any employer.

### **Example 6**

Whilst this example did not affect us directly I would like to bring it to your attention. Methamphetamine is a huge problem within the young unskilled population in NZ that you are asking us to employ. 9(2)(a) employed NZ staff who were using methamphetamine in the home that they provided. The home was damaged and was washed inside and out and refitted. Whilst insurance covered this cost of \$80,000 I forsee in the future that it will be mandatory to drug test on a monthly basis so insurance companies are not having to payout claims for this damage.

### **Example 7**

9(2)(a)



**The dairy industry is not a dumping ground for NZ's unemployable.**

Our Phillipine staff are a breath of fresh air to work with. They turn up for work with a smile on there faces, they listen, they tell you if they have made a mistake or have broken something, they are honest and they want to be there. We work in a happy environment which means the cows are not under stress by being pushed or mistreated.

## **Proposed changes to the Essential Skills Visa**

At present when classification is made with the ANZSCO codes under the Dairy Farming industry we only have Skill Level 1 and Skill Level 5 as below and no levels in between. There is a huge discrepancy between your Skill level 1 tasks and Skill Level 5 tasks within our industry and have listed them below for your reference.

The new proposal that is being consulted on is based on remuneration only with the skill levels again being 1 – 5, may be suitable for some industries however the problem is it does not fit within the dairy industry.

[Major Group 1 Managers](#) >> [SUB-MAJOR GROUP 12 Farmers and Farm Managers](#) >> [MINOR GROUP 121 Farmers and Farm Manager](#)

LIVESTOCK FARMERS plan, organise, control, coordinate and perform farming operations to breed and raise livestock.

### **Indicative Skill Level:**

In Australia and New Zealand:

Most occupations in this unit group have a level of skill commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification. At least five years of relevant experience may substitute for the formal qualification. In some instances relevant experience and/or on-the job training may be required in addition to the formal qualification (**ANZSCO Skill Level 1**).

### **Tasks Include:**

- breeding and raising livestock for the production of honey, meat, milk, skins, eggs and wool
- monitoring and maintaining the health and condition of livestock
- providing pastures and fodder to maintain appropriate nutritional levels
- moving livestock to optimise feeding opportunities
- organising and conducting farming operations such as catching, drenching and milking livestock, sterilising machines, and collecting, grading and packaging produce
- directing and overseeing general farming activities such as maintaining pens, sheds and cages, fertilising, controlling pests and weeds, and growing fodder
- maintaining fences, equipment and water supply systems
- organising the sale, purchase and transportation of livestock and produce
- maintaining and evaluating records of farming activities, monitoring market activity and planning production accordingly
- managing business capital including budgeting, taxation, debt and loan management
- may select, train and supervise staff and contractors

### Occupations:

121311 Apiarist  
121312 Beef Cattle Farmer  
**121313 Dairy Cattle Farmer**  
121314 Deer Farmer  
121315 Goat Farmer  
121316 Horse Breeder  
121317 Mixed Livestock Farmer  
121318 Pig Farmer  
121321 Poultry Farmer  
121322 Sheep Farmer  
121399 Livestock Farmers nec

[Major Group 8 Labourers](#) >> [SUB-MAJOR GROUP 84 Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers](#) >> [MINOR GROUP 841 Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers](#) >> UNIT GROUP 8415 Livestock Farm Workers

## UNIT GROUP 8415 LIVESTOCK FARM WORKERS

LIVESTOCK FARM WORKERS perform routine tasks in livestock, egg and wool production.

### Indicative Skill Level:

Most occupations in this unit group have a level of skill commensurate with the qualifications outlined below.

In Australia:

AQF Certificate I, or compulsory secondary education (ANZSCO Skill Level 5)

In New Zealand:

NZ Register Level 1 qualification, or compulsory secondary education (**ANZSCO Skill Level 5**)

For some occupations a short period of on-the-job training may be required in addition to or instead of the formal qualification. In some instances no formal qualification or on-the-job training may be required.

### Tasks Include:

- patrolling, inspecting and reporting on the condition of livestock
- providing livestock with feed and water
- assisting with maintaining the health and welfare of livestock
- mustering and droving livestock to milking and shearing sheds and between paddocks to ensure sufficient feed is available

- washing and cleaning udders, and attaching milking machines to udders and milking cows
- collecting eggs and placing in incubators
- herding sheep for shearing and keeping mobs separate during shearing
- spreading fleeces on skirting tables for classing, pressing wool and branding bales
- exercising horses by walking, riding, leading and swimming, and attending to horses at track work, barrier trials and races
- cleaning stables and hatcheries, storing bedding and performing minor repairs on fixtures, buildings and fences
- assembling, preparing and storing horse gear

**Occupations:**

- 841511 Beef Cattle Farm Worker
- 841512 Dairy Cattle Farm Worker**
- 841513 Mixed Livestock Farm Worker
- 841514 Poultry Farm Worker
- 841515 Sheep Farm Worker
- 841516 Stablehand
- 841517 Wool Handler
- 841599 Livestock Farm Workers nec

**My alternate option for consideration**

I have based my option for consideration around the career progression path within the dairy industry detailed from Dairy NZ.

The remuneration per hour rate based on the mean salary figure per annum and have included accommodation value of \$9000 per annum referenced from Rabobank’s 2016-17 survey that has just been conducted.

The hourly rate could be within a range depending upon what the accommodation was valued at.

Skill Level	Category	Responsibilities	Remuneration (including accommodation)	ANZSCO	Visa Length & Restrictions	Children & Partners
Low-skilled	Dairy Farm Assistant	Someone completing tasks under direct supervision and with few areas of responsibility other	\$22.87	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 1 year;</li> <li>• Labour market test requires a Skills Match Report;</li> <li>• no 12-month stand-down applies</li> </ul>	NO

		than within the dairy shed.				
Mid – skilled	Assistant Herd Manager	Normally has two years' experience or a relevant qualification, with some responsibilities outside the dairy shed under guidance from a Manager or Employer	\$23.64	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 1 year;</li> <li>• Labour market test requires a Skills Match Report;</li> <li>• no 12-month stand-down applies</li> </ul>	NO
Mid – Skilled	Herd Manager	Normally has a minimum of two years' experience and sound knowledge of identifying and treating animal health problems. Would have some responsibilities such as herd health and feeding, pasture management and assessment, with guidance from the Manager or Employer	\$25.05	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 3 years;</li> <li>• Labour market test requires a Skills Match Report; no 12-month stand-down</li> </ul>	YES
Highly–skilled	Farm Manager	Makes the weekly decisions on farm and is in charge of achieving physical performance, with little or no financial accountability	\$30.54	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 5 years;</li> <li>• Labour market test <u>does not require</u> a Skills Match Report;</li> <li>• no 12-month stand-down</li> </ul>	YES

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Highly-skilled	Operations Manager	Responsible for working within the farm's physical and financial budget, often negotiating with banks and farm supply companies. Manages all aspects regarding staff and sometimes does the GST return.	\$32.09	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 5 years;</li> <li>• Labour market test <u>does not require</u> a Skills Match Report;</li> <li>• no 12-month stand-down</li> </ul>	YES
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## **South Island Work to Residency Temporary Visas**

In 2016 the government announced that it would implement a one off work to residence temporary visa to Low-Skilled Essential skill visa holders in the South Island only.

### **Option for transition arrangements**

The industry as a whole needs some clarification on this and should not only apply to the South Island.

The dairy industry across New Zealand is reliant upon our migrant staff members and are having the same issues as the South Island to find suitable staff.

In our area in the Sth Wairarapa there are a number of Phillipine staff on farms that would be eligible for the residency temporary visas. Why should we discriminate against them if they are not in the right area. Whats being done about them?

We would not like to see our staff who under the current proposed structure being classified as low-skilled after being employed with us for 3 years to have to leave the country for a stand down period.

This would be disruptive to our business and cost the industry more money to have to find new staff and train all over again.

### **Seasonal occupations**

It is inappropriate to classify dairy farm workers as seasonal occupations. Amongst the industry our season runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> May. During the months of



June & July we class these months as drying off, which is when we do our maintenance jobs on the farm and we require our farm staff to assist with these jobs.

Our contractual obligations that our staff are employed under have a start date with no end date as they are employed by us until such time as they are fired or they wish to leave. The seasonal structure that you are proposing therefore does not apply to our industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

I hope that this submission helps with identifying the real business on-farm issues that we face as an industry and how overseas workers are needed to fulfil a shortage of the mid-skilled level jobs.

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