HUMAN CAPABILITY IN AGHORT WORKING GROUP

Project: Research Stocktake

Stage 1 Literature collection and annotation

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INTRODUCTION
This New Zealand bibliography was compiled by researchers at Lincoln University and while extensive does not in any way purport to be a complete set of references on New Zealand agricultural labour issues. Lincoln University itself holds copies of a significant proportion of New Zealand literature and research into all agricultural issues and topics. While many references listed here were easily located through library and database ‘keyword’ searches in some cases they were found ‘accidentally’ on the library shelves. This suggests that others may have been ‘missed’, especially as the topic area is so varied. Agricultural labour material appears across a wide range of topic areas from agriculture, to economics and commerce, and rural geography and rural sociology. The majority of references listed in this bibliography are available from New Zealand libraries and include books, chapters in books, research reports, theses, journal articles, conference papers and proceedings as well as some industry reports.

Wherever possible an ISSN or ISBN number (in some cases both) has been provided with the references listed. This offers an additional option for searching these references on most New Zealand library catalogues and databases. Many other industry reports are available from relevant organisations and unpublished resources, such as, for example, Kellog Scholarship Reports are available on application to the relevant educational institution. An increasing number of resources are also available from the Internet. The bulk of the bibliography provides abstracts of the references listed; an * after an abstract indicates that the original abstract or document has been copied with the permission of the Authors/Publishers. The final section provides a list of references, without abstracts, to which the authors had no immediate access.

The bibliography is presented alphabetically by author and is searchable by ‘author’, by ‘date of publication’ and by ‘keyword’. In many case the titles of resources provide useful information on the specific topics addressed. The publication date also provides clues as to what ‘current’ issues might be; in those cases where papers are historical works, rather than current for that time, this is recorded in the keywords. New Zealand spelling is used throughout except in those cases where the published title uses American spelling; thus it is ‘labour’ rather than ‘labor’, ‘organisation’ rather than ‘organization’ and so on.

The resources included in this bibliography span a considerable number of years. Over this time the terms and concepts used to describe the various prevailing issues in agricultural employment have changed considerably. For consistency, and in order to be faithful to the issues current to the eras in which individual papers and reports were written, the keywords used in this document adhere to terms used in original documents. Thus the keywords describe the agricultural labour force with modern phraseology such as ‘human resources’ and ‘intellectual assets’ as well as the more dated ‘hired labour’. Additionally, in many cases the selection of keywords used cover topics that are very similar and yet can have markedly differing meanings – for example, a distinction is made between ‘wages’, ‘earnings’ ‘income’, ‘finance’, ‘incentives’ ‘perquisites (perks)’ and ‘rewards’. A direct result of these factors is the extensive keyword list presented below. These are grouped under the following general subject headings: location; type of farming/farming activity; type of research/reference material; social factors; education and training; employment; and, others. It is suggested that readers will benefit from gaining some familiarity with the keywords before searching for specific topics.
KEYWORDS

Location
New Zealand, Australia, South Island, Canterbury, Southland, South Taranaki, mid-Rangitikei, Bay of Plenty, Te Puke

Type of farming/farming activity
Sheep farming, dairy farming, arable farming, pastoral farming, horticulture, apple orcharding, kiwifruit farming, large herds, smallholders, sharemilking, diversification, pluriactivity, share farming, shearsers, off-farm employment, off-farm enterprises, on-farm operations, technology, innovation, once-a-day milking (OAD), robotic milking, farm enlargements, ownership structure, earnings, wages, farm incomes, rewards, incentives, perquisites (perks), finance, farm management, informal planning, formal advice, financial flexibility, financial viability, economic stability.

Type of research/reference material
Empirical research, empirical data, survey, survey data, interview survey, official statistics, labour statistics, qualitative research, quantitative research, case study, case studies, personal experience, employee’s personal experience, ‘real’ farm example, participant’s accounts, pilot study, soft systems methodology, discourse analysis, non-random sample, data sources, lack of data, social science research, historical review, historical, 1970s, 1980s, rural history, rural sociology, economic sociology, bibliography, abstracts, literature review, proceedings, conference papers, Human Capability Framework, AERU, Rural Resources Unit

Social factors
Social factors, rural-urban drift, rural population, rural population change, rural issues, rural life, rural youth, housing, living conditions, labour force characteristics, demographics, women, ethnicity, health issues, farm accidents, interpersonal relationships, farm workers’ lifecycle, family employment, farming family, unpaid family workers, farm succession, meritocratic access, psychological contracts, intellectual assets, migrant workers, recruitment of overseas employees, social/psychological factors, motivation, image, social capital

Education and Training
Training, vocational training, employer training, industry training, career information, career, education, education/training providers, educational resources, education funding agricultureITO, cadet schemes, skill requirements, students

Employment
Labour, labour trends, future predictions, labour force requirements, labour shortage, labour productivity, labour efficiency, full/part-time work, human resources, hired labour, worker typology, employee selection, employee retention, human capability/competence, employment guide, employment contracts, Employment Contracts Act, job creation programmes, Farm Employment Programme, employment practices framework, Amuri Dairy Employers’ Group, employment conditions, staff management, management styles, entrepreneurship, work relations, employment relationships, Employment Relations Act 2000, contests
Others
Policy, government, government policies, trade unions, National Awards, Agricultural Workers Act 1977, Farm Workers Awards, Industrial Relations Act, New Zealand Farm Workers Association, economic policy, deregulation, restructuring, WWII

A report compiled to overview labour market literature themes and to validate these using in-depth interviews with farmers and key players in the industry. Quantity and quality of labour were identified as the two main issues. The research, however, had significant limitations in its applicability. These included the small sample size (8) and the fact that this sample was not random. Additionally, the sample did not include the perspectives of all types of farmer. The report includes the interview schedule used and a matrix of findings.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, survey, qualitative research


Includes a report of a manpower working party that covers the following issues: statistics available; recent and present position of farm manpower; manpower targets; recruitment; training of farm workers; retention of labour in farming; labour-saving machinery, agricultural contracting enterprises and group labour schemes; farm workers’ housing; statistical tables; and a list of recommendations.

Keywords: New Zealand, labour statistics

ANDERSON, Diane (1996) Rural research with an emphasis on social topics and issues: A list of rural research which has been undertaken in New Zealand over the last ten years. MAF Policy Technical Paper 96/6.

ISBN: 0478074336

A bibliography compiled from information supplied by university departments, government departments and non-government organisations on rural research topics undertaken after 1983. Research on labour, employment and work is listed under the following sub-headings: employment, employer/employee relations, gender issues and trends, historical issues and trends, and unemployment. Listings include unpublished theses. For some listings abstracts are also included.

Keywords: New Zealand, bibliography


The drift from rural to urban areas is identified as the cause of the labour problem. To remedy this requires a change in attitude toward the agricultural labour force and the provision of equal amenities and opportunities as those that are available in urban areas (conditions of employment, pensions, education provision, home ownership opportunities etc). Two schemes are suggested; the first a rural farm settlement scheme for closely settled rural areas. This
would appeal to those with ‘limited’ ambition, and would offer the benefits of an urban community in a rural setting. It would also attract additional labour into the agricultural workforce. The second focuses on attracting labour to more remote and dispersed areas; in exchange for labour commitments to these areas, financial assistance toward eventual farm ownership would be provided. The emphasis in both schemes is on the importance of long term planning and places farm labour within a wider context of economic growth in the primary industries.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural-urban drift, labour shortages


The evolution of the New Zealand Farm Workers Association is discussed in the context of the political, union and work climate of the late 1970s and early 1980s in New Zealand. The political influences on, and within, organisations involved in agriculture in New Zealand are highlighted. While this article is written primarily from a union perspective the association itself did not only deal with industrial matters. The FWA lobbied for improved social conditions in rural areas and for bettering the prospects of farm workers. Characteristics of farm employment in the 1970s are discussed including employer/employee relationships, the distinctiveness associated with rural living and the movement of skilled workers out of farming.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, 1970s, historical, New Zealand Farm Workers Association


A review of available farm income statistics. The statistics available are shown to be inadequate because information is not comparable across data sources. The point is made that to contribute towards policy assessment accurate knowledge of the current levels of farm incomes, the trends in those incomes and the population to whom that income accrues is needed.

Keywords: New Zealand, farm incomes, data sources

An analysis of the variations in individual earnings across four characteristics of individuals using data on New Zealand’s employed labour force at the 1990-1991 census. The four characteristics tested are level of education and skill, experience, industry of occupation and employment status. Agriculture is one of the occupation industries analysed.

Keywords: New Zealand, official statistics, earnings


ISSN: 0111-0012

An extensive bibliography of rural population-related issues grouped into three sections: population dynamics, population characteristics, and settlement dynamics. Labour supply appears under the heading ‘rural labour’ in population characteristics. References to rural labour also appear sorted under regional and type of publication headings.

Keywords: New Zealand, bibliography, rural population


This thesis tracks the rural mythologies of New Zealand from their origins to the mid-1980s. Early chapters cover the rural tradition of New Zealand and rural change over time. The thesis then challenges these myths through investigation of the subjective experience of the rural way of life and case studies of former rural residents. The thesis concludes with discussion of the perpetuation and commodification of the rural mythologies.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural sociology


Discusses some of the pitfalls and negative aspects of taking up sheep farming. Having enough finance available and mismanagement are identified as ongoing problems. To succeed ability is important, and what is needed is a technological, efficient, competitive and well-organised approach to the farm as a business. An important component of success is better planning. Anyone going into farming also needs to love farming, and farm life, as there is much to gain beyond economic value. Farmers are perceived to have a bad image with the community as a whole.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, finance, human capability/competence, image

A comprehensive outline of the agricultural labour force in New Zealand. The absence of an agricultural proletariat makes New Zealand different from most other countries. Characteristics of the agricultural labour force covered include the factors influencing supply of, and demand for labour, status of labour on farms, and share farming. Within this discussion there are details of changes in the numbers of hired workers, terms of hiring, seasonal labour, wages and organisation of agricultural labour. Much of the focus is on issues surrounding the use of hired labour, the importance of which can be differentiated according to the type of farming. In this respect, in particular, dairying is identified as being different.

Key words: New Zealand, labour force characteristics, hired labour, share farming


ISSN: 0069-3839

A farm labour shortage was identified as a result of WWII and changes in the nature of the farm working population. At the time there had been a shift from employees to owner workers; the prospect of ownership was thought to be the primary draw card when attracting people into farming. Emphasis, however, is made of the fact that it not so much the nature of the work itself but the life that goes with it which resulted in labour shortages. Key factors identified and discussed in this respect are the provision of adequate housing and access to education opportunities for farm workers’ children. At the time the shift of industries in to country towns depleted the available labour force. Sheep farming, particularly in high country areas, was singled out as a sector of the farming community experiencing labour problems as a result of distance factors.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, labour shortages, education, housing


A thesis which examines work relations and forms of production in dairy arming and apple orcharding in New Zealand. A typology of worker relations is developed comprising three generic types of workers – those who are unpaid, those who earn wages and those who are self employed. Each type of worker is then associated with particular types of enterprise. Two conceptually different types of enterprises are identified – capitalist and family based enterprises.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, apple orcharding, worker typology, work relations

ISBN: 0959781129

An expanded version of a bibliography published in 1984 as part of the first Conference on Labour, Employment and Work. This edition contains many more entries, all entries are indexed by keywords and the scholastic sections include abstracts. The major sections of the bibliography list references alphabetically by author, under type of publication. It is also possible to search by Keyword Index (of which agriculture is one), Author Index and Date Index.

Keywords: New Zealand, bibliography


ISBN: 0477070809

An investigation of the orchard workforce in the Te Puke area in 1985. Surveys of both orchards and migrant workers were conducted to identify the characteristics of each. The future needs of orchards, in respect of labour requirements, are outlined and, in particular, labour shortages are predicted. Improvement of living conditions for migrant workers is also suggested.

Keywords: New Zealand, Te Puke, horticulture, migrant workers


The processes used by a dairy farmer, with expertise in human resource management, to effectively manage the employment relationship were investigated as a case study. Three categories of processes were identified: employee resourcing, employee retention and human relations.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, employment relationships, case study

CANT, R. J. and WOODS, Mary J. (1968) An analysis of factors which cause job-satisfaction or dissatisfaction among farm workers in New Zealand. Technical Paper No. 2, Agricultural Economics Research Unit, Lincoln College.

Job satisfaction is seen as one part of the farm labour problem. The problem at this time is identified as one of retention of labour rather than recruitment. An empirical survey was conducted with 75 students with farm working experience. The ability of the farmer to handle
labour was found to be key to the manpower retention problem. This man management includes both the technical and human relations aspects of management. The study highlighted the importance of personal relationships between employer and employee.

Keywords: New Zealand, survey, staff management, interpersonal relationships


Deals with the problems of attracting, and keeping, workers on farms. Workers going to other sectors of the economy and rural-urban drift are identified as key to the problem. The situation of those employed on, and living on, farms are highlighted in terms of a farm workers’ lifecycle. This has three stages at which distinct problems may occur. The first is at time of marriage, the second at the time when children reach secondary school age and finally at around 45 years of age when the father is ‘slowing up’. This last problem is especially problematic in hill and high country areas. To encourage stability in the industry and reward those who give continued service the establishment of a provident fund is suggested. Such a provident fund would be industry run and would pay out after 25 years of service, thus recognising that farm work is a special case. It could also be offered as an inducement for future farm labour.

Keywords: New Zealand, employee retention, incentives, farm workers’ lifecycle


ISSN: 0743-0167

In the years between 1935 and 1957 attempts were made to transfer American-style rural sociology to New Zealand. Initially the ground was prepared for this through sponsorship by an influential group of intellectuals, visits by leading American rural sociologists and support from the Carnegie Foundation. Then between 1944 and 1957 the attempt at transfer was made in the New Zealand Department of Agriculture. The transfer failed and the reasons for this failure are shown to turn on the internal institutional structure of the Department, and the way in which it was articulated with powerful interest groups.

Keywords: New Zealand, historical, rural sociology


ISSN: 0110-5272 and/or 0485-5752

Paper reporting a workshop held to examine issues surrounding technology use (once a day milking (OAD), high technology dairy, Robotic milking), working conditions and training and their impact on human resource efficiency in New Zealand dairying.
Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, technology, innovation, once-a-day milking (OAD), robotic milking, labour efficiency


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Paper presented by a Dexcel Consulting Officer based on personal experience of involvement in the dairy industry. Suggests that careers advisors need to show the dairy industry in a more positive light to attract people, that there should be mentoring assistance available to those working in the field and that the funding and availability of scholarships be increased.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, career information, education funding


ISSN: 0069-3839

Conference paper that discussed work study, or work simplification. This can be seen in terms of method study (finding ways to improve methods used on farm) and work measurement (measuring the work content of any job). Topics raised include mechanisation, the use of contractors, industrial parallels and automation.

Keywords: New Zealand, labour productivity, technology


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A report on the impact of the Farm Workers Awards. Benefits to workers in terms of higher wages are reported although this has come at the expense of the friendly, informal relationship between farmers and workers. Overall from the perspective of the farmer the implementation of these awards means having to change their methods of practice. Some changes, such as reducing hours worked, which would bring farm work into line with other industries, are not practicable. Need to recognise that farming is different to other industries.

Keywords: New Zealand, Farm Workers Awards, wages, employment relationships

This report presents the results of a study of trends in the demand for key skills in the horticulture industry for 12 regions of New Zealand. The study used a “bottom up” approach whereby knowledgeable and informed people in the industry were identified and their opinions sought, collated and published. This gives a broad industry wide overview.

Keywords: New Zealand, horticulture, skill requirements, labour trends


This is a comprehensive, empirical study undertaken in the late 1930s investigating the quality of life of dairy farmers. A total of 526 dairy farms were visited covering 12 districts in the North Island; Southland was the only South Island district surveyed. The survey was somewhat labour intensive as both farmers, and their wives, were interviewed wherever possible. The report does not include the survey instrument. In addition to the ‘people’ data, data on characteristics of the farms themselves were also collected to check for sample representativeness. This allowed for some relationship testing between ‘farm’ conditions and ‘living’ conditions. To assess living conditions a range of variables were considered; farm households and families, (including age, occupational history, level of schooling), housing and household equipment, work and leisure patterns, expenditure and consumption. Analysis of relationships between these variables was also undertaken. No regional comparison was carried out.

Key words: New Zealand, dairy farming, historical, social factors, survey


Sheep farming is touted as rewarding both financially and as a way of life. The requirements to succeed in sheep farming are ability, desire and financial resources. The value of diversification and cooperative use of resources, including shared breeding, are suggested as aids to success.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, human capability/competence, diversification


ISSN: 1171-4662
ISBN: 0478073364

A report commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to investigate the economic factors associated with farm transfers between generations of one family. The results
of in-depth case-studies of 10 Canterbury families who had been, or were in the process of, transferring farm properties are reported. Aspects of the transfer including retirement decisions, the living standards of the retiring farm family and the viability of the farm with a new generation in place was assessed. The study identified a lack of retirement education programmes.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, farm succession, case studies


ISSN: 0110-7720

This discussion paper includes the contents of a one day seminar held at Lincoln College on 3 July 1986 for the first meeting of the New Zealand Rural Economy and Society Study Group. Included are two papers read by two invited speakers, an account of the discussions which occurred throughout the remainder of the day, and a record of those who attended the meeting. The general tenor and good attendance of the seminar suggests quite strongly that there was enthusiastic support for the Study Group. Participants expressed a need for a longer conference in future, and for a newsletter to keep participants informed of research activities. The results of the day’s activity showed that there were many issues awaiting systematic research. In general, there was widespread support for the promotion of rural research in order to provide understanding, informed commentary, and effective policy for rural society.*

Keywords: New Zealand, rural issues, proceedings


The results from a study of recent farm enlargements are presented in this report, along with background data on recent changes in the structure of agriculture. Official data were analysed and a survey undertaken of 166 farmers who enlarged the size of their farm in 1982 and 1983. A wide range of physical and attitudinal data were subjected to descriptive, associational and factor analytic methods.

Recent structural changes in agriculture include both subdivisions and enlargements, and there is enlargement at the same time as the total number of farms increases. Survey results show that the scale of the enlargement is quite large. While opportunity to buy land was an important factor in the enlargement decision, the three distinctive motivations for enlargement are capital gains, to improve income, and to help settle a son in farming. The results of the study suggest that explanation of enlargement requires recognising the distinctive character of land in agricultural production. The importance of land underlies each of the three motivations for enlargements. The results also confirm expectations that the law is ineffective in its attempts to control aggregation of farm land. Some suggestions are made for revisions of closer settlement policy which may make it more effective. *
Keywords: New Zealand, farm enlargements, motivation, survey


The results from an interview survey of rural working-age people in Southland are presented in this report, along with an overview of relevant domestic and international literature. Data from 1,445 cases are used to describe their work situation in August 1988. The main results show that the population of rural Southland has increased since 1986 but the workforce is now smaller. There are more people under 15 years old and over 30 years old, and less people between 15 and 30 years old. Rural communities have lost people since 1986 and rural areas have gained people since 1986. One in nine households on average has an unemployed person. While the unemployment rates are similar to official estimates the number of jobless is higher than official national levels and is at 13 percent of the total workforce. Many respondents are keen to undertake further education especially in agriculture and business. *

Keywords: New Zealand, Southland, rural population, literature review, interview survey


ISSN: 0113-4507

This report reviews recent changes in rural society by describing adjustments on the farm and in the rural community. The financial position of farmers is described and shows that restructuring has had differential impacts on farmers and the farming sector. Farmers with a severe equity crisis have been involved in a slow debt restructuring process for which adjustment assistance has not been generous. The management response is one of reducing expenditure and, for some, undertaking new management strategies and/or diversifying into new land uses.

Rural services are no longer supplied as of right and many are organised on a user-pays basis. Unemployment has been rising steadily and shows high levels in rural areas. Population change since 1986 is variable with some rural areas having no change in number and some showing a decrease in population. Rural areas do have changes in the composition of the population. Average farm size continues to decline and there are now more small farms of up to 100 hectares. The presence of corporate farms is suggested by anecdotal evidence but does not show up in the official statistics. *

Keywords: New Zealand, restructuring, rural population change

A review of literature on success and goals in farm management shows that farmers seek to achieve a number of goals and have different management styles. Since farmers combine both business and way-of-life goals in complex and personal ways we use methods which focus on the subjective aspects of the farmer in order to describe styles of farm management. The Q method, along with interview transcripts, provide a detailed account of three distinctive management styles in a non-random sample of Canterbury farmers.

The goals of the Dedicated Producer are to be the best farmer, to achieve top-quality product, and to develop the farm. Their strategy is to work hard, plan carefully, and focus on the farm itself. The goals of the Flexible Strategist are to achieve a balance and a decreased workload, to market their farm products well, and to enjoy their family. Their strategy is to market effectively, use information, and keep in touch with off-farm events. The goals of the Lifestyler are to have a good lifestyle, to enjoy their family, and to improve the environment. Their strategy is to employ family members, cut back when necessary, and nurture the environment.

The results show that when farmers are given free rein to indicate what goals are important to them, they generate three distinct styles of management. Within each style there are different ways of achieving goals and different meanings given to apparently similar goals. The management styles have some similarities with the results of other studies but in this study the types are not described in terms of a single dimension and each type contains successful farmers. *

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, literature review, management styles, non-random sample, empirical data


ISSN: 0113-4507

This Discussion Paper records the 14 papers presented in the Rural Economy and Society Section of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (N.Z.) held at Lincoln University 7-9 December, 1990. The papers cover development issues, rural history, contemporary research and issues relating to the discipline of rural sociology in New Zealand. The development paper examines landownership in Northern England and the tensions surrounding different land uses. The history papers examine the impacts of transport technology, long-term trends in agriculture exports, and Shelley’s activities in rural education in Canterbury. The contemporary research papers, while wide ranging, include common themes such as how farm people have responded to the economic downturn in recent years by seeking off-farm employment. Another focus is the rural community with one paper examining local politics and another paper examining public drinking. The disciplinary papers look back at our rural research and then examine prospects and priorities for research in future. *
Keywords: New Zealand, rural sociology, conference papers, abstracts


This report delineates a range of topics that could be included in MAF social research using mainly the suggestions available in the current sociology literature. Suggestions from five MAF personnel were used to supplement the literature. Both sources lead to a list of topics including the farm and the rural community, international linkages and consumers. In addition there is a need for research on public opinion. The report suggests that an appropriate research strategy should include the development of a rural data base which is supplemented with farm and community studies using the full array of social science research methods. Agro-commodity chains should be examined and rural public opinion regularly surveyed. *

Keywords: New Zealand, social science research


In this Research Report the farm and structural changes in New Zealand between 1984 and 1990 are described by way of analysis of official statistics. A brief review of theory on family farms under capitalism precedes data on changes in the financial position of farms. Incomes for many farms fell sharply by 1986, then rose to remain at lower than the 1976 to 1985 ten year average. While financial pressure has eased recently, it is still unevenly distributed as a minority of farms hold a majority of debt. In recent years the proportion of income from off-farm sources has increased. An analysis of structural changes shows that sheep numbers have decreased noticeably while dairy stock and deer numbers have increased. There has been continued declines in the rate of increase in farm numbers, and for 1990 there was, for the first time, a decline in farm numbers. Also, there is a return to the ‘disappearing middle’ across the range of farm sizes. Significant or commercial farms total about one half of all farms in New Zealand. Farm employment data show a decline then an increase in the total between 1984 and 1990, and all of the increases occurred in the full-time female category. Some company ownership of land occurs but there is no sign of significant gains in corporate farming. The report concludes with a description of farm level responses and then makes some concluding points about the persistence of family farms in New Zealand agriculture. *

Keywords: New Zealand, official statistics, labour force characteristics, family employment


ISSN: 1170-7682

Smallholding is identified as a popular activity around many New Zealand cities and yet there has been little recent study since research in the 1970s. This research report presents a
preliminary study of perceptions of the rural lifestyle and how these change over time. The report is of value to policymakers concerned with smallholding, and to interested observers of contemporary developments in New Zealand primary production.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, smallholders


ISSN: 1170-7682

There has been an increase in the number and spread of large dairy herd farms in New Zealand. A qualitative survey of a 29 large dairy herd farmers (over 500 cows) was undertaken to describe the social organisation of production on these farms. Five distinctive types of large herds farms were identified based on the way the farmers organised their workers and their involvement in milking. Across all groups planning, organisation and attention to detail were identified as important key success factors. Large herd farms have more employees than family farms and these employees play an important role in the success of the farms. The character of large herds dairy farming precludes family involvement. Large herds dairy farming supports meritocratic access to land.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, large herds, staff management, qualitative research, meritocratic access


Farms in New Zealand and Australia demonstrate how farm men and women are working away from the farm in ways that parallel urban families with multiple income earners and dual career couples. The rural literature recognises this development by reporting levels of off farm work and by developing the concept of pluriactivity as it arose in and from its European setting and has been applied to studies of rural society in Australasia. This article specifies precisely the reasons given by farm men and women in the South Island, New Zealand, for working on or off farm. The results reported support those perspectives which emphasise the non-economic factors involved in decisions made about working on or off the farm and deepens our understanding of pluriactivity.

Keywords: New Zealand, South Island, pluriactivity, empirical research


ISSN: 1170-7682
ISBN: 0909042241

This report extends earlier (1993) research on smallholdings in Canterbury. The present report uses a random sample survey and covers basic descriptive information, land use, general attitudes and motivation. It also compares lifestyles with farming-oriented smallholders. *

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, smallholders, survey


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A presentation by the representative of the New Zealand Workers Union in support of the National Awards scheme. The talk points out that the procedures set out by the Award are rarely followed and that it is important for the satisfaction and benefits of both employers and employees to do so.

Key words: New Zealand, dairy farming, trade unions, National Awards


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A paper that highlights the high incidence of family progression on dairy farms. There are, however, differences in production levels achieved dependent on whether they were family or non-family farms. Productivity on farm also demonstrates differences within family farms.

Key words: New Zealand, dairy farming, family employment


The future prosperity of farming is dependent on the skill and quality of young people entering the industry. The agricultural industry was affected at the time by many external forces including industrial unrest, the cost-price squeeze and the implications of Britain’s entry into the EEC. Keys to attracting men to sheep farming were the importance of education, of thinking of sheep farming as a farm business and not necessarily viewing it from the perspective of eventual farm ownership.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, education, career

A Conference paper presented by the President of Federated Farmers which discusses on-farm employment issues under the following headings: training of employers and employees; the public purse and the agricultural work-force; career paths and farming; meeting the costs of labour; and social conditions and industrial relations. Points out that while historically farm work has been given a low status in reality a lot of skills are required. Farmers also need managerial skills and knowledge particularly in respect of man management. Some of the issues raised were also discussed in a series of workshops that followed this presentation.

Keywords: New Zealand, training, social factors, skill requirements


The shearer labour force is investigated in this paper. The paper begins with a brief history of shearing in New Zealand and the evolution of the shearing industry. Other sections covered include manpower planning and shearers, the shearer labour force, gang shearing, shearers and their union, the shearers’ awards, rates of pay and income analysis of shearers.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, historical, shearsers


Dairy in the South Island is predicted to grow as a function of new farms, improved efficiencies and increasing average sizes of existing farms. Such growth will test the markets for land, dairy cattle and the services and infrastructure necessary to support the industry. Crucial factors affecting growth will be the availability of extra stock, ability to process the extra milk and staffing issues. An addition 2000 dairy farming jobs are predicted from growth.

Keywords: New Zealand, South Island, dairy farming, labour force requirements


This study investigated the activities of a selected group of entrepreneurial farmers in an attempt to understand their reasons for pursuing off-farm activities. A total of 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with entrepreneurial farmers. In order to effectively distinguish the characteristics of these farmers a smaller group of more conventional farmers were also interviewed. The results of the research lead to the development of a model of emerging entrepreneurship among New Zealand farmers. Fewer differences were found between entrepreneurial and conventional farmers than expected.
Keywords: New Zealand, qualitative research, entrepreneurship


This paper discussed the differences between rural and urban life in New Zealand, changes within rural areas and makes some comparisons between New Zealand and other developed countries. Published research is also reviewed. The paper concludes that consistent rural-urban differences are not apparent in New Zealand and it is suggested that future research should take a more general perspective.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural population, rural life


ISSN: 0110-0637

The absence of trade unions in agriculture is identified as having had consequences for employer-employee relations in the industry and is a major gap in New Zealand industrial relations. The history of agricultural industrial relations and provisions of the Agricultural Workers Act 1977 are discussed. Despite improvements obtained in regard to wages, to security of tenure of housing and redundancy the Act is, however, effectively confined to the area of labour market regulation.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, Agricultural Workers Act 1977


A paper that compares the development of industrial relations, and the differences in the collective organisation of shearers and agricultural workers, related to the activities of employers and the state, in Australian and New Zealand primary industries. The development of unions and industrial relations are found to be uneven; social and political frameworks are developed to explain these differences. The actions and decisions of parliaments and industrial tribunals were found to be crucial in variously debilitating, or promoting, unions and industrial relations.

Keywords: New Zealand, Australia, trade unions, historical

GILLING, Marg (1999) “When farming was doing well – when farmers wives were the social glue”, pp. 67-77. In David ROBINSON (Ed.) *Social capital in action*, Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

ISBN: 0908935374
In 1997 a research project was undertaken by MAF to define and describe the living standards of farm families in the mid-Rangitikei area. The relationship between farm families and the community and the issues, problems and strengths of these families and rural communities were identified. This paper reconsiders this research in light of the restructuring of the 1980s. It is argued that social capital, defined in terms of trust, networks, assumptions about social norms, sharing of resources and community input has been severely damaged by the changes in the 1980s.

Keywords: New Zealand, mid-Rangitikei, restructuring, social capital, 1980s


ISSN: 1170-7682
ISBN: 0909042039

This research analyses the effects on the farm sector of the reform of New Zealand agricultural policy undertaken in 1985. This analysis is placed within a discussion of the larger issue of the specificity of the farm sector and whether this specificity requires special support from the state in most of the developed countries. The study describes the crisis of the New Zealand economy at the beginning of the deregulation process and explains why the farm sector was at the centre of the reform. The removal of state support to agriculture and the transition measures set in place are documented. The research also analyses the effects of the reform on farms at both the structural level and in terms of farm incomes. The sheep and dairy sectors are analysed in detail. The analysis concludes that the farm sector has maintained its level of economic activity despite important reductions in state support. Finally, this study discusses some lessons that can be obtained from the New Zealand experience, notably in relation with the specificity of the farm sector. *

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, dairy farming, economic policy, deregulation


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A conference paper setting out the elements important for inclusion in the written employment contract and describing some problems that are specific to the farming community. These include dealing with the fluctuating hours of work through the season, the one year contract, the legal position on employing couples, adding bonuses to wages, making deductions for vehicle damages and dealing with performance problems.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, employment contracts

A paper outlining the background of sharemilking and the importance of sharemilking in the production chain. Low numbers of entrants in the dairy industry will affect the number of sharemilkers in future years and should be considered a serious industry problem.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, sharemilking, labour force requirements


Paper written at a time when labour shortages on dairy farms were acute. Two issues were identified, firstly how to keep labour on farms and, secondly, how to attract more labour to farms. Possible solutions suggested included: ‘selling farming as a way of life’, as well as it being ‘technical’, and an occupation ‘worthy of the best brains’; sharing responsibility with employees; making the best use possible of outside (off-farm) help; and support for land settlement schemes. The social importance of the farm within the rural community was also addressed. It was suggested that part of the problem was the poor image held of both farming and rural life, and that this needed to be amended. These suggestions were made in terms of benefits to the farmer/employer.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, labour shortages, employment relationships, image, rural life


A report on several small courses held in South Taranaki to help dairy farmers improve their abilities as employers. The importance of having a set of house rules, of being able to give clear and logical instructions for work and of good interviewing techniques is discussed. Attendance at the courses gave young farmers, in particular, greater confidence to handle labour.

Keywords: New Zealand, South Taranaki, dairy farming, employer training


ISSN: 0069-3790
Research conducted New Zealand-wide with three research aims: to determine the employment conditions of farm workers and compare these with alternative jobs; to assess the impact of the subsidised Farm Employment Programme on career farm workers and farm cadets; and to investigate factors which cause dissatisfaction amongst farm workers and their families. Personal and economic characteristics of both farm workers and managers were identified. Information was also collected on their opinions of their jobs, their goals in life and factors that would increase job satisfaction. Some analysis was carried out to identify which characteristics influenced these.

Keywords: New Zealand, empirical research, employment relationships, employment conditions, Farm Employment Programme


ISSN: 0110-7720

A research programme to evaluate the Farm Employment Programme was devised by the author in conjunction with the Department of Labour in mid-1979, and a pilot study was subsequently carried out. The main research study did not proceed for reasons connected with the Department of Labour, but it was felt appropriate to record the evaluation procedures and such results as could be gleaned from the pilot survey. In particular, this paper aims to indicate the methodology which could be used to undertake evaluations of manpower programmes. *

Keywords: New Zealand, job creation programmes, Farm Employment Programme, empirical research, pilot study


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

This presents a detailed discussion on the factors that need to be considered when adding an extra one man of labour. It focuses on the dairying industry in particular. The underlying premise is that it is better to employ a married man than a single one, necessitating the provision of housing. This is discussed within the context of other choices a farmer might have for capital allocation. Details of how one might estimate the costs of employing an extra man are given although the point is made that this is not simple to do. Additional to this there are social and psychological issues involved; farmers going into this situation need to know how to manage labour as well as recognising that many of the advantages/disadvantages cannot be counted monetarily.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, housing, social/psychological factors, employee selection
Farmers and workers often have conflicting aims, which can make relations between them difficult. In the long-term an important aspect of fostering good employer-employee relations is the use of incentives. Three possible incentives strategies are suggested; direct incentive payments, indirect incentive payments and non-material incentives. The first of these, direct incentives, is shown to be the most problematic to implement, the latter two are more practicable. A range of possible perquisites are suggested from good housing and gifts of stock, to the provision of a good workplace and appropriate encouragement and praise where due. There is a need to match incentives to employees and an atmosphere of mutual trust is important when offering incentives.

Keywords: New Zealand, perquisites, incentives, employment relationships


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Reports a decrease in educational resources devoted to agricultural courses coupled with potential increases in demand in the number and quality of trained educated agriculturalists required by the industries. The scarcity of people to work on farms is an obvious immediate effect but in the long-term the most important effect will be a shortage of graduates and postgraduates available for management, advisory and research roles.

Keywords: New Zealand, education resources, training, future predictions


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Some historical/contextual information is provided on the dairy labour force. Describes the knowledge and skills required for dairy farming and predicts future labour needs

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, skill requirements, labour force requirements

A conference paper that addresses various issues of labour input on dairy farms. The issues include labour on dairy farms, response to extra labour, the cost of labour and skills and knowledge required by effective workers on the dairy farm. The paper also reports conditions of employment on dairy farms in terms of hours worked and time off.

Key words: New Zealand, dairy farming, employment conditions, labour efficiency


Employers and employees in the dairy industry were interviewed about their employment history, recruitment, relationship maintenance, conflict management and ending the working relationship. The natural progression of employees up the career structure, lack of experienced staff in the Canterbury area and a poor image of the dairy industry were identified as issues contributing to retention problems.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, employee retention, qualitative research


Paper presented by a farm business manager expressing concerns about the future of sharemilking. Presents a case study of a partnership based on personal experience.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, sharemilking, personal experience, case study


Conference paper presented by a sheep farmer outlining the principles he uses for effective farming. These are discussed under the headings of work planning, his own example of labour use and areas where economising is possible. These latter include well thought out farm layout, transport options, grazing systems, breeding policies, number of staff and the ability of managers.

Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, on-farm operations, personal experience

A study aimed to assess the impact of share farming, partnerships and companies on each sector of New Zealand agriculture. The overall encouragement given by financiers, advisors and industry bodies was also evaluated. The purpose of these evaluations was to enable comparison with the UK situation and to indicate the extent to which the New Zealand experience could be repeated in the UK.

Keywords: New Zealand, ownership structure


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A farmer’s personal approach to employee training is outlined. To be successful it is suggested that four basic functions of management are followed; planning, organising, leading and controlling.

Keywords: dairy farm, staff management, personal experience


ISSN: 0069-3839

Paper discusses the role of labour productivity in New Zealand farming. Labour productivity is one measure of technical productivity but it is the most important one for New Zealand farmers. This is because labour is a scarce factor in agriculture and because best use must be made of both farmers and employees time. The farmer’s income depends on labour productivity.

Keywords: New Zealand, labour productivity


ISBN: 0477085725
ISSN: 1171-4662

This is a bibliography of the research reports and other related papers commissioned by the Rural Resources Unit since 1988. It also includes conference papers, related publications and
internal intelligence reports. Literature search can be done by report type and author, topic grouping and author as well as by alphabetical author listing title, abstract and report classification.

Keywords: New Zealand, Rural Resources Unit, bibliography


ISBN: 0909042233

This paper reviews a range of statistics which investigates how dairy farms are changing in size, intensity and level of production, both nationally and by region. It looks at the increase in the area of land over the previous ten years, and makes some predictions, by region, for growth over the next ten years. It examines profitability trends and how the rate of growth in on-farm expenditure is tracking ahead of income. It shows that while the nominal payout over time has been increasing, the real payment continues to decline. It also discusses rates of return on capital and how they have trended and discusses some future issues such as availability of capital, water and labour.*

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, future predictions


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A farm employee’s experience and views on dairy farm employment. He suggests that effective labour use includes motivation, communication and consultation by employers.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farm, labour efficiency, employee’s personal experience


ISSN: 0113-4485

This report presents data from a study of the farm transfer process between generations of farm families in Canterbury. A small, non random sample of men and women were interviewed, and their responses were used to carefully develop a detailed understanding of farm transfer. Initial ideas were tested in later interviews as the grounded theory approach was used to allow farm men and women to indicate key factors in farm transfer. Results cover entry, ‘into it’ and exit
phases and the discussion examines farm entry and retirement, involvement in the farm, lifecycle differences, and choosing the successor. Hypotheses for future research are developed and specified. Findings from this study tell as much about how farm men and women move through their business and family lives as they do about how farms are transferred from one generation to the next. *

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, farm succession


ISBN: 0478073569
ISSN: 1171-4662

Follow-up to AERU Research Report 208 on family farm transfers. This study quantifies the earlier work by using selected sample survey techniques over a wider area of the South Island. Part of a wider international study the focus of this report is on the process of how older farmers retire from business. The study is taken from the perspective of the women and men from the older and younger generations and looks at intra-family relationships and community impacts evolving from these retirement decisions. This study provides data comparable to that gathered in a similar project in Canada.

Keywords: New Zealand, South Island, farm succession, empirical research


A thesis which focussed on the influence of non-economic factors in explaining the economic activity of ethnic groups. In particular, it examined the ethnic solidarity and economic resource mobilisation within agricultural settings in New Zealand. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) was used to investigate concepts of ethnic entrepreneurship. Eleven ethnic groups who had consistently played important roles in New Zealand agricultural history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were compared. These were: the Chinese, Indian and Italian market gardeners; the Lebanese, Dalmatian and French grape growers and wine makers; the Scandinavian and Bohemian dairy farmers; the German and Polish farmers and growers; and the Dutch immigrants who became largely involved in the horticultural and dairy industry. The research showed that only the Asian entrepreneurs developed informal, ethnically bounded business networks.

Keywords: New Zealand, ethnicity, qualitative research, economic sociology, entrepreneurship

Report of a survey that investigated career information available to secondary school children in Taranaki. The student’s perceptions of dairy farming as a career were investigated along with their expectations of what they desire in careers more generally. Principal results showed that dairy farming was not perceived as an attractive career because it involved hard work and associated poor social life/conditions.

Keywords: New Zealand, Taranaki, dairy farming, quantitative research, students, career information


ISSN: 0069-3790

This report presents an economic analysis of farm accidents in New Zealand. The social costs of farm accidents are not well understood: their monetary importance to the farmer, hence the nation, has not thus far been quantified in a way meaningful to safety policymakers. The social costs of accidents were classified into four general categories: the cost of uncertainty, the cost of suffering, the direct loss of output, and the indirect loss of output or “resource cost”. *

Keywords: New Zealand, farm accidents


ISSN: 0038-0199

A paper addressing discourse within rural studies, interest in which is premised on the belief that meanings and knowledge are products of discursive constructions by groups and institutions. The paper argues that the discursive field of agricultural economics in New Zealand exemplifies this premise. The texts and statements of the Federated Farmers of New Zealand are analysed and a convergence of FFNZ’s narrative of agricultural deregulation in New Zealand with those of the government and academia was identified.

Keywords: New Zealand, discourse analysis


This paper provides another set of opinions on labour and social issues in regard to rural areas although it is written in response to the discussion that followed Pryde’s (1977) paper on Labour and Social Relations. Provides a concise outline of the requirements of the rural labour force. Makes the point that social contact is also important. The edition also includes a summary of discussions on this topic in the pages (pp. 73-89) preceding this paper.
Keywords: New Zealand, social factors, labour force requirements


This report presents a review of the information available concerning the social situation of those who live in rural areas. The report is divided into five sections: the farm unit and the trend toward larger farm holdings; the farm labour force in terms of numbers and composition; the age structure, sex composition, marital status and migration patterns of the rural community; the farm labour problem with particular attention given to the out-migration of farm employees; and finally a brief discussion of rural social change and the state of rural services.

Keywords: New Zealand, social factors, labour force characteristics


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A dairy farmer and Industry Director’s views on the role of education in agriculture along with an industry review of research, extension and education.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, personal experience, education

LYNCH, J. and ANDERSON, D. (1994) *Research on rural topics, with an emphasis on social issues: A list of rural research which has been undertaken in New Zealand over the last ten years. MAF Policy Technical Paper 94/2.*

ISSN: 1171-4662
ISBN: 0478073518

A resource document which compiled a list of research projects on rural topics, particularly social issues, undertaken by staff and students of New Zealand Universities over the previous five to ten years. In addition to the Universities, several government departments and non-government organisations were also asked to provide information on research undertaken.

Keywords: New Zealand, bibliography

Lower North Island dairy farmers (n=159), who had retired between 1990-1995, were interviewed about farm succession and their experiences. Succession included not only the transfer of the land from parent to child, but also the transfer of farming skills and family equity from one generation to the next to maintain farming activities. While most farmers wanted succession to occur, it was actually quite rare, at only some 6 percent of cases.

Contemporary discussion about succession had focussed on achieving successful succession through improved communication between the parties, forward planning, and fairness/equality between all offspring. In practice, however, successful succession was influenced by financial flexibility and economic stability, two factors determining whether succession was an option on retirement.

Retaining financial viability and flexibility provided inadvertent succession planning. It only began when a child showed commitment to a farming career and viability encouraged it. Bequest motivation and successful succession were interdependent. Farm advisors provided useful ‘sounding boards’ for succession plans and could help implement them. Advisors saw themselves having a greater role at all stages of the farmers’ planning process. The thesis argues for a greater recognition of farmers’ ability to plan informally for succession.

Keywords: farm succession, management, informal planning, formal advice, financial flexibility, financial viability, economic stability, empirical research, survey, interviews.


A comprehensive report of research carried out in the early 1980s which assessed the social and economic implications of the expansion of the kiwifruit industry. There is a particular emphasis on future labour requirements.

Keywords: New Zealand, Bay of Plenty, kiwifruit farming, labour force requirements


ISBN: 0473004658

A history of the early years of the New Zealand Workers’ Union written to commemorate its centennial year in 1987. The book traces the many changes in the New Zealand Workers Union since its inception as a branch of the Australian Amalgamated Shearers’ Union in 1887 and the subsequent extension of the organisation to include many other rural workers and their amalgamation into one union. Also included are appendices listing past Presidents and secretaries, important characters and details of union membership.

Keywords: New Zealand, shearers, trade unions, historical review

ISBN: 004658260

A detailed examination of the lives of rural workers in New Zealand in the nineteenth century. This book looks at those involved in both the arable sector and the pastoral sector. Dairying was not included as it did not employ much paid labour until the turn of the century. Early chapters cover the nature of landholdings and the developing rural economy, the emerging labour market (including immigration and the depression), and the itinerant experience of the rural workforce. Other chapters describe the work undertaken by these rural workers and their living conditions. The book concludes with a chapter on conflict and worker organisation.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural history, arable farming, pastoral farming


This study looked at New Zealand high school and university students’ perceptions of the dairy industry. A pilot study was conducted at a Canterbury high school and students enrolled in an agriculture course at Lincoln University were surveyed. The study identified a number of areas where intervention is necessary to improve the image of dairying.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, empirical research, survey, students


ISSN: 0069-3839

Approaches farm labour problems from an individual rather than a national level with a focus on dairy farming. Acknowledges that while both employers and employees seek satisfaction from their work the factors which determine this are different. To keep farm workers it is important to offer a balance between contributions and rewards (satisfaction/dissatisfaction). It is pointed out that dissatisfaction is relative matter and that as farm workers are more mobile than farmers there is a need to lift the rewards on offer in relation to other jobs. Factors can be determined as either satisfizing or dissatisfizing. Satisfizing factors include work itself, achievement, advancement, responsibility, recognition, and rises in wages. Dissatisfizing factors are conflict of the role as worker with other roles, status, interpersonal relations, security in old age and wages and perks.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, employee retention, motivation, rewards

ISSN: 0069-3839

A conference paper that explains ways to measure and analyse work activities in order to improve farming methods. Some principles of labour economy are also outlined.

Keywords: New Zealand, labour efficiency


A survey conducted in Canterbury of 26 farms to investigate the labour input into the farm business. In particular the relationship between family farm members and the extended family is investigated. The role of women and children, in particular, are investigated in respect of their contributions to farm viability and sustainability in social as well as economic terms.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, unpaid family workers, family employment, qualitative research


ISBN: 0478074913
ISSN: 1171-4662

The research investigates the level of integrated family decision-making during the succession process, discusses stress factors and how to resolve them. The research points to a need for farm owners to progress beyond a narrow framework of estate disposition following death. Transparency, recognition and communication of farm business and family goals are necessary for successful succession planning.

Keywords: New Zealand, farm succession, qualitative research


A need for employers to adopt a new attitude toward employees and improve their management is proposed. Overall identifies a need to raise the status of farm employment and the farm employee. The majority of suggestions as to how this might be done are framed in reference to the author’s own sheep farm. Employee morale, job satisfaction, planning and vocational training are identified as important. Vocational training, however, needs to be effective and targeted to suit those receiving it. Management training, for example, is recommended at owner/manager level, while short course training is more suitable for regular employees.
Keywords: New Zealand, sheep farming, vocational training, staff management, ‘real’ farm example


ISBN: 0908817029

This is a basic guide to staff employment that covers aspects of staff selection including decision making, advertising and interviewing. The Employment Contracts Act is explained along with terms and conditions of employment. Other topics covered are living and working together, job instruction, team building, time management and training.

Keywords: New Zealand, employment guide, Employment Contracts Act


A situation analysis of the pipfruit industry which assessed the likely impact of pipfruit production expansion on servicing industries, growers and the industry as a whole. The report includes sections on labour requirements for both orchards and servicing industries. A further section of the report outlines three types of available training schemes: the Horticultural Cadet Scheme; apprenticeships in horticulture; and short courses.

Keywords: New Zealand, Hawkes Bay, horticulture, cadet schemes, training


This summary publication provides abstracts of all AERU publications from 1962, when the unit was established, up until March 1982. As well as the (then) current series of Research Reports and Discussion papers, three other series (now discontinued) are also abstracted. These are the Publication series (1964-1968), Technical paper series (1966-1972) and the Market Research report series (1972-1976).

Keywords: New Zealand, AERU, bibliography

This report presents results from a qualitative study of sheep/beef and dairy farmers in the Temuka/Geraldine area of the South Island, New Zealand. Farmers’ accounts of their farming practices, and how they decide to adopt, or not adopt, innovations are analysed to highlight the key orienting principles that guide their decision making. Farmers in each type of production have different orientations to innovation, in large part reflecting the nature of the industry in which they are located. Sheep/beef farmers emphasise profitability and the need to control risk and to farm safely. Dairy farmers emphasise increasing production, increasing efficiency and control by monitoring production. These results are important for alerting researchers and educationalists to the farmers’ point of view in the development of effective extension. *

Keywords: New Zealand, South Canterbury, technology/innovation, qualitative research


ISSN: 0069-3839

Small-scale surveys were conducted in selected areas (Hawkes Bay and Cheviot) to assess the farm labour position. Farmers, farm employees and people who had recently left farming were surveyed. This paper presents recommendations from the survey rather than survey results per se. Proposals suggested to halt the drift from farm to city employment included: the construction of motel style accommodation for single employees; provision of housing in settlements rather than on farms for married employees; and, that bonuses should be adapted to achieve maximum satisfaction. It was also suggested that uncertainty in prices and profits could be counteracted by greater output per man; achieved by best (most efficient) use of manpower and good organisation of both farm and labour.

Keywords: New Zealand, Hawkes Bay, Cheviot, rural-urban drift, wages, living conditions, survey


One of a series of studies designed to provide basic information about the farm labour situation. This study focuses on one representative South Island county. The structure of the farm labour force is described, labour shortages, and the areas in which they occur are investigated and the rewards offered to the farm labour force in this area is compared with that of urban areas.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, labour force characteristics, rewards


ISSN: 1174-524X
Agricultural training is characterised by low enrolments and poor supply. Training needs to be industry directed and should provide a mix of theory and practical, recognising that the two are closely aligned. The agricultural industry also needs to attract the right people.

Keywords: New Zealand, training, employee selection


In 2000 the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry commissioned a project to be carried out collaboratively between Massey and Lincoln Universities. It sought to identify, quantify and compare skill requirements in the agricultural, horticultural and forestry sectors with the training and qualifications available. Both objectives are reported within the theoretical context of historical developments in agricultural education and training in New Zealand. The Human Capability Framework was used as a theoretical base.

Keywords: New Zealand, Human Capability Framework, education/training providers, skill requirements


ISSN: 0078-0170

In late 1936 the Census and Statistics Department commissioned a special survey into production and employment on dairy farms. For the employment portion of the survey only those regularly resident and/or working full time on the farms were considered. This data was differentiated according to sex, family membership and full or part-time work. It was found that most dairy farming was carried out on farms with only one or two males engaged in full-time farm work. Dairy farming had a considerable part-time labour force. The statistics collected were converted to Full Time Male Equivalent units and these were compared with butterfat production, area of farm used for dairying and number of cows milked.

Keywords: New Zealand, survey data, labour productivity, family employment, full/part-time work


ISSN: 0743-0167

An editorial article that draws together research undertaken, in a variety of different rural environments and cultures, on rural youth. The papers and reports are discussed in relation to a set of strategies that may guide further development of rural youth studies. It is noted that a
good deal of youth research has undertaken the important initial step of documenting the varied conditions of young people's lives. More integrated and conceptual understandings of rural youth can look to identify generic dimensions and processes that shape their lives in rural cultures, economies, societies and spaces. A framework is proposed to assist in more explicitly theorizing the notion of young people.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural youth, social factors


Census data showed a substantial reduction in farming manpower between 1956 and 1961. Farm cadet schemes were proposed as a medium-term answer to this problem. A range of schemes had been implemented across different districts with each scheme displaying different characteristics. The Wellington-West Coast Farm is used as an example of a typical scheme. The success of the schemes are reliant on the farmers being proactive as they are farmer operated and could not function without the support of farmers, both in administration and training. Better production and retention of manpower are suggested as the main benefits of the schemes.

Keywords: New Zealand, cadet schemes, training, employee retention


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Paper presents equity share agreements as a means to farm ownership. This offers new opportunities outside the traditional dairying systems. For such agreements to work partners involved need to be able to think laterally, have a degree of flexibility, get along well, get to know each other and be able to communicate whatever the situation.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, ownership structure


ISBN: 0478073798
ISSN: 1171-4662

Paper looks at the nature and diversity of demographic and economic change in rural New Zealand from 1986-1991. The study explores the impact of restructuring in both public and private sectors and the impact of deflated agricultural commodity prices on rural communities. The rural population is described along with features of population migration. Employment in the rural sector is investigated with regard to demographic variables. Employment in services
by both industry and region is also covered.

Keywords: New Zealand, rural population, restructuring, labour force characteristics, demographics


Situation where the attraction of labour is easy, the retention is difficult. There is a need to improve the skills of the farm labour force and to teach farmers personnel management. Paper covers a wide range of issues with varying degrees of relevance to the labour force itself and to social conditions. Some of the problems identified are the result of broader social changes. Some discussion notes following the paper present a variety of viewpoints on these issues.

Keywords: New Zealand, social factors, employee retention, housing


A comprehensive survey conducted to assess the health of New Zealand farmers. Data was collected from a sample of several thousand farmers on a range of health issues. Responses are classified by district, farm type, age of respondent and farm size. The data is presented in table format and no attempt was made to interpret the data in any way.

Keywords: New Zealand, health issues, empirical research, survey data


ISSN: 0301-8830

A conference paper that introduces an employment practices framework to ensure best people performance in the dairy industry. A three-tier approach is suggested as a realistic framework for continuous improvement: a base level concerned with ‘understanding and adoption of minimum legal requirements’; and intermediate level involving the ‘adoption of a code of good employment practice’; and lastly, an advanced level concerned with ‘achieving an international standard in people management’. A case study of the Amuri Employers Group is presented as an example of these concepts in practice.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, Amuri Dairy Employers’ Group, employment practices framework

New Zealand farm workers do not fit into the system that which prevails for other workers and seem to demand special treatment. The chief differences are the age structure of those employed on farms, the nature of workers’ relationship with employers and the nature of the industry itself. The Agricultural Workers Act 1977 was thought to provide an answer to these sorts of problems by creating a basic structure of separate bargaining machinery and statutory recognition of bargaining agents. This paper provides a detailed outline of the Act, and how it affects the agricultural working population, and contrasts aspects of this with the organisation of other unions in New Zealand.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, Agricultural Workers Act 1977


The labour situation of many New Zealand dairy farms was identified as problematic for a large number of people in the dairy industry. A soft systems approach was applied to the on-farm labour situation to obtain an understanding of this. The aim was to then define action to improve the situation. To this end five relevant systems were modelled.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, empirical research, soft systems methodology


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Conference paper outlining the factors that define the on-farm labour problem in the dairy sector and the type of action likely to improve the situation. The on-farm labour situation is complex because the problem affects all those involved in dairying. The nature of the changes that need to be put in place to improve the situation are different depending on who is defining the problem. There is limited information recorded on farm employment in the dairy sector. The paper discusses labour efficiency, milk payouts and changes in the average size of dairy herds, regional and individual farm business factors, social aspects of the on-farm labour situation, possibilities for improvement in the on-farm labour situation and prospects for the future.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, lack of data, labour efficiency


Reports a survey of students in Waikato, Taranaki and Canterbury designed to gain a better understanding of the image dairy farming has. Dairy farming was found to have a poor image. The commonly held view was that dairy farming suited people who had been brought up on a farm, did not do well at school and who did not mind working in relative social isolation.

An investigation into the brief life of the Bureau of Social Science Research whose only full survey completed and (eventually) published was the Dairy Farmers Household Survey. Overall the review highlights the nature of the problem created by social science research for government. Reasons suggested for the demise of the Bureau were that the government of the day did not like what the survey found – both in terms of public reaction to the data and amid fears of proving information, and ammunition, to opposition political parties. The special circumstances of the war may have also played a part.


Conference paper that discusses the poor level of information available on the current size of the labour force employed on farms. There was concern that official estimates were increasingly further out of line with reality. Then goes on to discuss the labour force needed to service the farmer and process his output. The freezing industry is used as an example and it is suggested that it is the best interests of both farmers and workers to introduce new cost saving technologies. This would create a short term problem whereby accepting new techniques lowers the requirement for labour. Other key points made cover the importance of worker loyalty, the fact that the farming industry needs incentives to expand and the need to increase international competitiveness.


ISSN: 1174-524X

An article which looks at ways to attract and retain quality staff by working on three key areas: how to win in the competition for labour; staff attraction as part of staff selection; and, coaching and leadership to get the best from the team.

Paper based on the personal career experience of an Aparima Farms farmer. He suggests that way to maximise education and training is to adopt a ‘godfather’ type approach. To enhance future productivity study should have an increased emphasis on business management. For others more practical short term training courses are more appropriate.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, education, training


ISBN: 0477000185

The process of labour market change that resulted from liberalisation pressures in the agricultural sector is examined. A framework is outlined for considering the issues, and theoretical issues underlying the labour adjustment process are discussed. Then empirical evidence on wages, employment and other labour market changes are reviewed. These findings are then placed in the context of the wider debate about flexibility in the labour market.

Keywords: New Zealand, deregulation, wages


ISBN: 1840149752

The state provision of skills to agricultural labour was significantly restructured during the 1990s, altering the relationship between education and the economy. This was in response to changing demands for agricultural labour - a significant shift in the types and numbers of skills required for the agricultural labour force. The skills provided, however, will only affect agricultural production if these are the skills which farmers are willing to purchase. Changes also addressed an historical pattern of agricultural labour segregation by race and gender. Overall it was shown that the involvement of the industry in the design and provision of worker training is in itself insufficient to guarantee the relevance of training, its contribution to equality or to industry productivity.

Keywords: New Zealand, industry training, agriculture

Both external and internal factors are identified as potential labour problems. External to the farm are: rural urban drift as a result of industrial development, general labour shortages, and pressure to remain competitive overseas especially in light of Britain joining the EEC. On farm issues include the importance of the employer/employee relationship, isolation and associated social problems. Selection of the right staff, and being aware of what constitutes ‘good’ staff, is important, as is supervision. Supervision should be linked to creating job satisfaction. Contributing to this is good communication and consultation between the employer and employees. The ‘right’ type of workers from overseas, especially Britain, are suggested as an untouched source of labour.

Keywords: New Zealand, employment relationships, social factors, employee selection, recruitment of overseas employees


A conference presentation by a Department of Labour spokesman that outlines two employment schemes designed to get workers back onto farms. Loss of skilled farm workers had occurred as a result of the depression and enlistment into the armed forces for World War Two. The employment schemes offered government subsidies to farmers prepared to employ inexperienced labour as well as subsidising development work on farms (the cost of labour subsidised). There was a suggestion that employing ‘land girls’ was the alternative. Some key issues and concerns facing farmers at that time are voiced in the Question and Answer section of the report. Government policy was focused on ‘helping’ the farmer and making ‘every endeavour to meet the needs of farmers’.

Keywords: New Zealand, policy, government, World War Two, labour shortage


ISSN: 0743-0167

This paper examines the ways in which rural youth voice their understandings of what it means to be a young person at the end of the twentieth century in New Zealand. It describes the “Youth First” project which sought to understand what young people 10–17 years had to say as a basis for evaluating the last 15 years of economic and cultural change in New Zealand. Over the course of 3 years focus groups and "Youth Tribunals" were conducted across New Zealand involving young people from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. It was found that, rather than one “rural childhood”, there are in fact different possibilities in growing up rural. Maori and Pakeha youth, for example, draw on different cultural and linguistic resources to voice their relationships to place and identity.
Keywords: New Zealand, rural youth, ethnicity


ISBN: 0473031485

Off-farm employment is an important facet of the structure of New Zealand farm life. This research report identifies and describes off-farm employment and its impact on the family farm, farm women and rural communities. The study seeks to expand the social research work available on rural New Zealand and to provide a factual basis for agricultural policy and decision making.

Keywords: New Zealand, off-farm employment, farming family, social science research


ISBN: 0478074654
ISSN: 1171-4662

A study of alternative farm enterprises that sought to examine the character of alternative farm enterprises and the significance of alternative enterprises to the farm and family finances. This is a summary report written to provide the main results, conclusions and policy implications to a wide audience. There is also a technical report on this research available (MAF Policy Technical Paper 97/7).

Keywords: New Zealand, off-farm enterprises, diversification, qualitative research


ISSN: 0260-2040

The horticulture industry has expanded rapidly in New Zealand and with it the demand for horticultural knowledge and skills. This account describes the development and situation in the industry as regards training up to the early 1980s. It also provides some estimates for future labour requirements and for the future of horticultural education and training in New Zealand.

Keywords: New Zealand, horticulture, education, training, labour force requirements


ISSN: 0260-2040
A paper which addresses the reasons people take-up horticultural occupations. Additionally, who these people are, in respect of age, gender and background, what factors determine their choices of one form of horticultural education over another and the jobs and careers these people eventually hope to attain are investigated.

Keywords: New Zealand, horticulture, labour force characteristics, education, training


ISSN: 0038-0199 and/or 1467-9523

A paper examining the changing situation of the New Zealand farm worker in relation to the development of agriculture and the evolution of government policies on relations between employers and employees. Union organisation in New Zealand has been made difficult by a rapidly changing farm labour force as a result of high levels of staff turnover. The farm labour force occupies an ambiguous position being truly aligned with neither the employer nor working class. The paper includes an appendix which describes the development of agriculture and the farm labour force in New Zealand.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, government policies


The changes in the rural labour force in New Zealand over the 50 years from 1950 to 1985 are discussed. During this period there was a shift in the balance of the labour force in distribution across types of farming, age and gender as well as changes in the numbers engaged in on- and off-farm employment. Employment conditions were varied depending on the type of employment, in particular in respect of union representation. Labour relations over the 50 year period are reported.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, employment conditions


ISBN: 0864760590

Publication of papers from a Department of Horticulture seminar that addressed the employment and training implications associated with the potential expansion of the horticulture industry in Canterbury.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, horticulture, training

The re-regulation of farming employment relations is outlined against a background of worldwide new right market-led economic policies which have generated a search for labour market and job ‘flexibility’. After several decades of exclusion – by several different governments – of this sector from the main system of industrial relations, the current legislation returns the country to an essentially free market/common law situation with a code of minimal terms with which employers are expected to comply. Collective action by labour is being discouraged as a matter of public policy. Exploratory research on employment contracts established since the passage of the Act and the effects of the legislation on trade unions with largely rural membership are analysed. Comparisons are made with developments in Western Europe. *

Keywords: New Zealand, policy, employment contracts


This paper reviews changes in farm employment over the 20th Century by viewing farm work as it was around 1900 and how it is appearing to be by 1999 through the eyes of contemporary observers. Then changes in work and employment were considered under the following headings: The Role of Government, the Labour Force, Production, Mechanisation, Pest Control, Transport, Communications, Marketing, Education, and Employment Relations. The paper concludes that while much farm work has increasing technological demands, at the same time much also retains its laborious nature. *A shorter version of this paper is also available.

Keywords: New Zealand, historical, employment conditions


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Keywords: New Zealand, historical, employment conditions

ISBN: 0646390651

A psychological contract can be described as “the mutual obligations to each other held by the two parties in the employment relationship”. This is a report of a project that studied the content and types of psychological contracts existing in the dairy industry.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, psychological contracts


ISSN: 1174-524X

Staff management and employment relationships in dairy farming have been problematic for many years. Employment relationships can be conceived as having legal and psychological components. Dairy farming employment relationships were investigated through employers’ and employees’ psychological contracts. The content of these psychological contracts was explored through a study of critical employment incidents recalled by a convenience sample of dairy farming employers and employees. Results suggested key issues prospective employers should discuss with prospective employees to ensure the establishment and maintenance of lasting and effective employment relationships. *

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, employment relationships, psychological contracts


ISBN: 0-86476-124-4

Conference paper that addresses the nature of the employment relationship and psychological contracts. Research was conducted by way of analysis of reported critical employment incidents where either the employer or employee had exceeded what informants thought was acceptably good or bad standards of that particular issue. The most numerous categories of incidents for employers were Environment, followed by Recognition and Pay. For employees the most recorded category was Loyalty followed by Hours and Property. A four stage staffing process involving high levels of discussion and negotiation is described.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, employment relationships, psychological contracts

Contests have played a major part in New Zealand’s economic development since colonisation. They are a part of the New Zealand psyche. After defining contests, this paper discusses the range and place of contests in economic development and the underlying theoretical concepts. How contests are used, operate in practice, and their benefits are discussed by means of case studies based on both documentary sources and participant’s accounts. The setting up and operation of contests is considered, together with the part played by the various stakeholders in any particular contest. Conclusions are drawn on the features needed to prolong their usefulness and longevity.

Keywords: New Zealand, contests, case studies, participants accounts


ISSN: 1174-524X

The first in a series of four articles that explore the impact of the Employment Relations Act on farmers; this article opens up the nature of primary industries and describes how the Employment Relations Act will impact on far more than just farmers.

Keywords: New Zealand, Employment Relations Act


ISSN: 1174-524X

The second in a series of four articles that explore the impact of the Employment Relations Act on farmers; this article examines the nature of impacts of the Act on farmers. This second article concludes with discussion of the differences between employees and contractors, and the impact of this issue on primary industry.

Keywords: New Zealand, Employment Relations Act


ISBN: 1877139465

As the new millennium began, with New Zealand primary production facing the most positive conditions since 1984, much could be undone by a farm labour crisis. This paper explores the nature of farm labour crises, with a consideration of the post 1945 period in New Zealand, set in the context of an international historical review of the subject. The paper describes research on the current problem commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Human
Capability Framework was used to explore the different dimensions of the current crisis. The results of the research project are reviewed and the ‘politics’ of labour shortages discussed in terms of their value and effects of the ‘crisis’ on Government, on the world of the primary producer, and on the public at large.

Keywords: New Zealand, Human Capability Framework, historical review


ISSN: 1174-524X

The third in a series of four articles that explore the impact of the Employment Relations Act on farmers; this article reviews the issue of good faith bargaining, which is an important part of the Act’s processes.

Keywords: New Zealand, Employment Relations Act


ISSN: 1174-524X

The last in a series of four articles that explore the impact of the Employment Relations Act on farmers; this article looks at the changes that the Act has made to the personal grievance and mediation procedures.

Keywords: New Zealand, Employment Relations Act


ISSN: 1174-524X

An article based on a research report into labour shortages. The original research was developed along the lines suggested by the Human Capability Framework. A Massey University team undertook a study of all the factors helping to develop human capacity in the industry while a Lincoln University team explored the opportunities available in the primary sector.

Keywords: New Zealand, Human Capability Framework, education/training providers, skill requirements

Addresses issues of productivity and human resource management involved in dairy farm employment. Suggests practical steps that can be made to ensure human productivity when people are considered as a resource.

Key words: New Zealand, dairy farming, staff management, human resources


A conference paper which suggests that staff are viewed as a capital asset. What is of concern in terms of effective staff management is how to create, retain, sustain and profit from an intellectual asset.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, intellectual asset


A survey designed to monitor trends and identify key issues affecting the growth of the rural sector. The survey found a positive mood within the Taranaki rural sector as a result of a general increase in income for farmers. Farm inheritance through generations was seen to be the norm. Employment was, however, a major concern with farmers struggling to find and retain good staff. Better education systems were seen as the best solution to this problem.

Keywords: New Zealand, Taranaki, survey, employee retention


A study of dairy farmers in Canterbury designed to establish base data and determine actual staff management practices. The research was exploratory and used a person-centred approach, asking respondents what they were doing and why. An effort was also made to understand the farmer as a person; a unique individual who makes choices based on his personality, values and circumstances. Overall the current staffing practices were found to be satisfactory although staffing was found to be an issue of getting the right person for a particular job in a particular system.

Keywords: New Zealand, Canterbury, dairy farming, staff management

This reports the results of a farm journal competition that elicited 400 responses on making farm labour a more attractive career to young men. The third most frequently mentioned reason for farm labour being hard to get, and to keep, was housing. The problem is approached from two perspectives; low standard of provision and economic difficulty for farmers providing housing. In respect of the former acceptable standards of housing for both single and married workers are discussed. For the second issue financial assistance options are outlined. Farmers who do not realise the substandard nature of their accommodation, and those who, even with finance assistance, have no hope of affording accommodation are identified as two problem groups. A common suggestion was for farm labour to be housed in rural villages or country towns. This could absolve farmers from housing provision, remove hazards of potential social conflict from on-farm living and lessen social isolation problems.

Keywords: New Zealand, housing, social factors, labour


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

A discussion of the key characteristics of good employers is presented from the personal experience of a sharemilker. These include maintaining high standards in all aspects of the business, appreciation of the real value of people to their business and maintaining open and frank communication, not only about work, but about both parties’ goals and ambitions in farming.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, motivation, personal experience, sharemilking


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

Paper presented by a dairy farmer that discusses four golden rules of employment – hiring the best people for the job, establishing agreements on what they are to do, monitoring their performance and staying out of their way. It is important to understand that all staff are different and that each individual has different needs. A range of suggestions are made to help motivate staff, ranging from involving staff in goal setting, to paying a good base salary and accepting that young staff are transient.

Keywords: New Zealand, dairy farming, motivation, staff management

WATSON, James (1991) “Rural life”, pp. 49-75. In Colin DAVIS and Peter LINEHAM,
An essay which reviews what has been written on the history of rural life in New Zealand. Discusses the difficulties associated with defining rural. Mainly historical and geographical writings are reviewed. There has been a lot of work on rural geography with a bit from sociology. A number of regional historical studies have been published. The review also points out where work is missing, including that on the relationship between Maori and European, the experience of rural women and the impact of humans on the natural environment.

Keywords: New Zealand, literature review, rural history


ISSN: 0301-8830 and/or 0414-9545

The legislation proposed was to bring agricultural workers under the terms of the new Industrial Relations Act. It is problematic, however, to apply the term ‘worker’ to many of those employed in agriculture. From the panel discussion that followed the main argument in favour of unionism was that farm workers should have the same rights as other workers. Arguments against included problems associated with imposing fixed hours of work, which is impossible in farming, that legislation should not be forced on people and that farm workers did not want a union.

Keywords: New Zealand, trade unions, Industrial Relations Act


ISSN: 0069-3839

A conference paper presented by the Assistant Secretary of Labour that presents the thinking of the Manpower Working Party of the Agricultural Development Conference. A lack of useful information makes it is difficult to establish the facts regarding the shortage of farm labour. The problem lies in retention of labour, rather than recruitment, particularly of mid-career workers. This is because of a combination of work (poor pay, lack of information on pay and perks) and social factors (isolation, home ownership problems, access to education for children). Possible solutions to these problems are the expansion of agricultural contracting enterprises, increased use of labour-saving machinery and the training of farm workers. This would ensure a more efficient work force and increased production.

Keywords: New Zealand, employee retention, employment conditions, social factors

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References without abstracts


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