

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS

Center for Small Towns



*“BELIEVING IN A BRIGHT, PROSPEROUS
FUTURE FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES.”*

Minnesota Dairy Labor Survey Results

WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA

REGIONAL
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP

Communities and their University building Minnesota's future

This project is completed through support from the
University of Minnesota, West Central Partnership

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Center for Small Towns

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West Central Partnership

The University of Minnesota West Central Partnership, legislatively funded in 1999, serves 12 counties of the Upper Minnesota River Valley watershed. This citizen led initiative's mission in launching education and research that help people understand and achieve sustainability in their region. Since its inception, West Central Partnership has funded/partnered on 50+ applied research and education projects in four priority areas: community-based clean/renewable energy, local foods/sustainable agriculture, sustainable built/natural resources, and building capacity in citizens and communities. Web site: www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu

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I. Introduction

According to USDA statistics, there are approximately one-tenth the number of dairy farms in the United States as 40 years ago. This appears true for the state of Minnesota as well. In the last decade, the number of dairy farms greater than 2000 cows has nearly doubled according to USDA NASS statistics. According to USDA ERS, “nothing in the near term suggests dramatic changes in these trends—dairy farms will continue to become larger, more concentrated in certain regions, and more specialized in producing milk.”

According to research by the University of Wisconsin, “...in a set of focus group public input sessions conducted by the Agricultural Technology and Family Farm Institute (ATFFI) in 1994 (Lezberg, 1994a, 1994b), it was found that for Wisconsin dairy farm families, farm entry (and exit) issues were at the top of the list of their concerns about the future of dairying in the state.”

Simultaneously, the market for organic and grass-based dairy products has increased at a higher rate than the decrease of small and mid-sized farms. This provides opportunity for small and mid-sized farms to retain a sizable share of the dairy market via transition to organic and grass-based production. Unfortunately, insufficient farm labor has become a common problem throughout the farm industry. With the increase in cost of dairy farm startups, new dairypersons have difficult time gaining ownership of their own farms. In Minnesota and elsewhere, most educational opportunities for new dairypersons favor conventional dairy production over more sustainable methods. This needs to change if we are going to fill the need for more small and mid-sized farms.

Minnesota dairy farms need a reliable pool of men and women who are trained, certified, and available through a hiring clearinghouse. Without this available workforce, many dairy farmers will not expand and will milk only a few more years. After that, their barns will most likely stand empty. With a coordinated and trained workforce, the same barn could be used by the present owner for a good number of years, and by a herdsman-turned-owner for many years into the future.

Dairy farm owners need help to find suitable workers. Many do not have the time and skill to train a new herds person on their own and cannot afford to put time into an unproven worker. Many new farm workers are immigrants who need assistance in working through language and culture barriers. Dairy farm owners also need reliable help so they can have adequate time off, especially if they are to maintain a healthy family lifestyle while staying in business. Dairy farm owners need a proven, reliable buyer for their farm business upon retirement. An experienced herds person(s) could be their best candidate, especially if they have worked on that same farm. With targeted guidance and education, some dairy farm owners can learn how to mentor new dairy people and potentially incubate several new dairy farms in the process of making their own dairy more sustainable.

Successful herds people need recognition for their achievements via a résumé of accomplishments and coordinated pool of resources, through which they can find the full range of opportunities to become dairy farm owners. Most lenders will not consider a herds person for farm ownership unless they own enough capital and possess a tested skill set to prove their abilities. This program would be developed to address these problems and fill the need for skilled herds people, as identified by a number of current dairy farmers.

To better support the labor force needs of the dairy industry, the Sustainable Farming Association (SFA), received supported by funds through the West Central Regional Partnership at the University of Minnesota to facilitate a survey of dairy producers across the state of Minnesota. The knowledge and experiences of dairy owners and operators were surveys to help understand the role that employees have in their operation. As employment changes continue to occur there is a need to locate and secure a stable source of qualified labor. Using this information, we can better understand the types of workforce trainings that are needed by our ever-changing industry.

II. Methodology

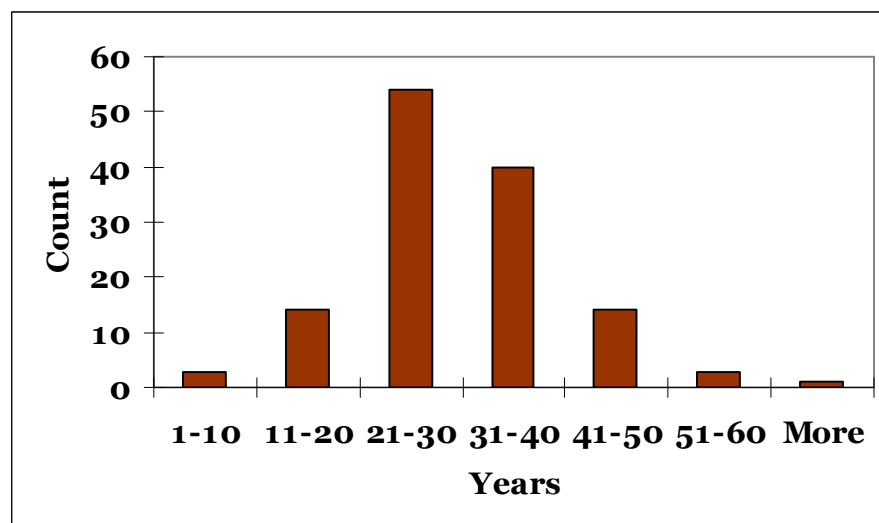
The Minnesota Milk Producers Association provided a mailing list identifying nearly 1,500 dairy operations from across the state. To reduce costs, a representative sampling strategy was enacted. To identify the number of surveys to send out to each county, Census of Agriculture data was examined to determine the distribution of dairies by county. This distribution was then applied to the full mailing list. A total of 498 surveys were mailed on November 5, 2008. A follow-up survey was mailed to non-respondents on December 3, 2008. A total of 142 surveys were returned yielding a response rate of 29%. Four surveys were returned as undeliverable. The number of responses by county can be found in appendix A. The original survey can be found in appendix B. The upcoming sections of the report will provide a summary of these results.

III. Summary of Findings

This section examines general operations structures, hiring and labor information, and herdsperson qualities. It is expected that this data will provide useful information in the planning of education and training opportunities for the dairy industry. It is not the intent of this report to provide commentary or speculation. Rather, it is our goal to provide an objective review and summary of the data.

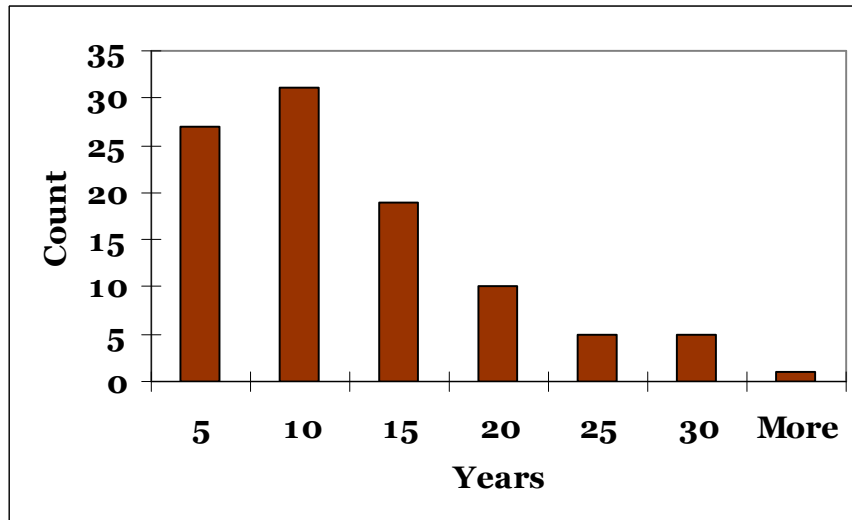
General Operation Data

Chart 1
Years in Dairy Production



For chart 1, the average number of years spent in dairy production is 30.9 years, with a maximum of 61 years and a minimum of 3.

Chart 2
Years Planning to Continue Dairy Farming



For chart 2, the average amount of time participants plan to remain in dairy is 12.1 years, with a maximum of 35 years and a minimum of 1.

Table 1
Changes to Dairy Operation

Changes to farm	Count	Average time-frame	Min/Max
Retire	31	6.69	1/15
Sell	21	4.83	1/15
Expand	37	3.50	1/10
Maintain existing structure	60	2.60	1/5
Transfer	38	3.80	1/6
Improve/Increase productivity	61	1.70	1/3

Please note that for table 1, participants could choose more than one response.

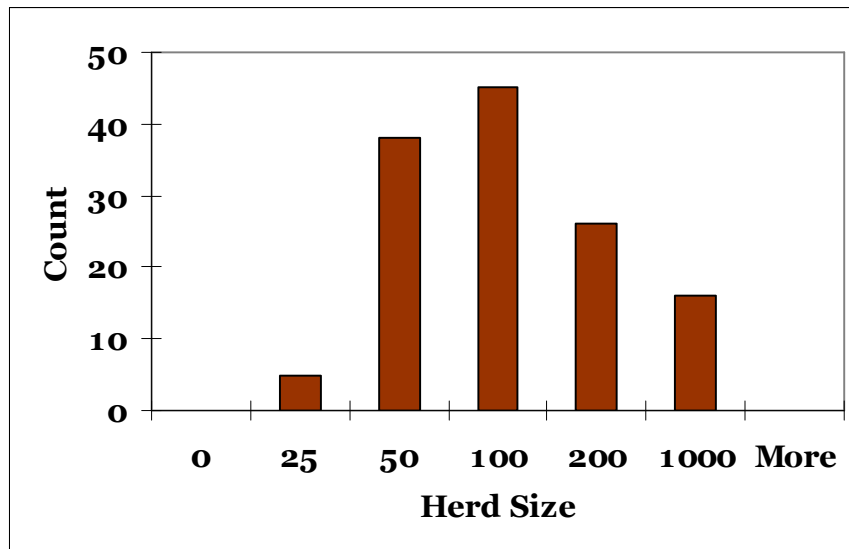
Table 1 displays the changes respondents have planned for their dairy operation, and the average number of years in which participants plan to enact these changes. Below table 1 is a list of responses to whom those selecting transfer planned on transferring their dairy operation. These responses suggest a focus on family continuing the dairy operation.

Transfer Recipients:

- sons
- sons
- son
- to son
- 3 sons
- Daughter/son-in-law
- son
- son
- son
- son to join us
- sell or stay to assist
- family
- daughter and son in law
- son
- find a partner
- son
- son
- sons
- Son's when we die
- son
- son
- Partially, employee, other?
- son and nephew
- son
- son and wife
- grandson
- work to transfer to sons
- 2 sons
- sons
- brother's sons
- son

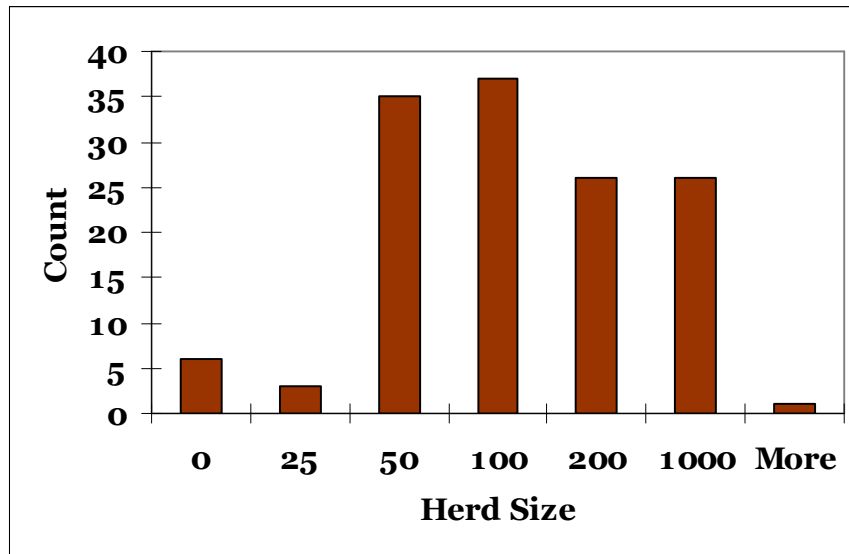
It is apparent that dairy operations – past, present, and future – are family affairs. The age distribution of dairy owners indicates a pressing need for transfer plans.

Chart 3
Herd Size Five Years Ago



For chart 3, the average herd size five years ago is 113.1, with a maximum of 750 and a minimum of 3.

Chart 4
Herd Size Today



For chart 4, the average herd size from the sample today is 148.9, with a maximum of 2,070 and a minimum of 8. Herd sizes are increasing.

Table 2
Type of Dairy Operation

Operation Type	Number	Percent
Compost/Bedding Housing	23	13%
Grazing	17	10%
Organic	2	1%
Free-Stall	60	35%
Tie-Stall/Stanchion	69	40%
Total	171	

There is a variety of operational types as indicated in table 2, primarily tie-stall or free-stall types.

Hiring and Labor Data

For the data in table 3, participants were asked to think about what they look for when hiring and employee, and rank them from 1 (most needed skills) to 7 (least needed skills). Table 3 displays the number of times a skill received each ranking, and the average rank.

Table 3
Desired Skills in Hired Labor

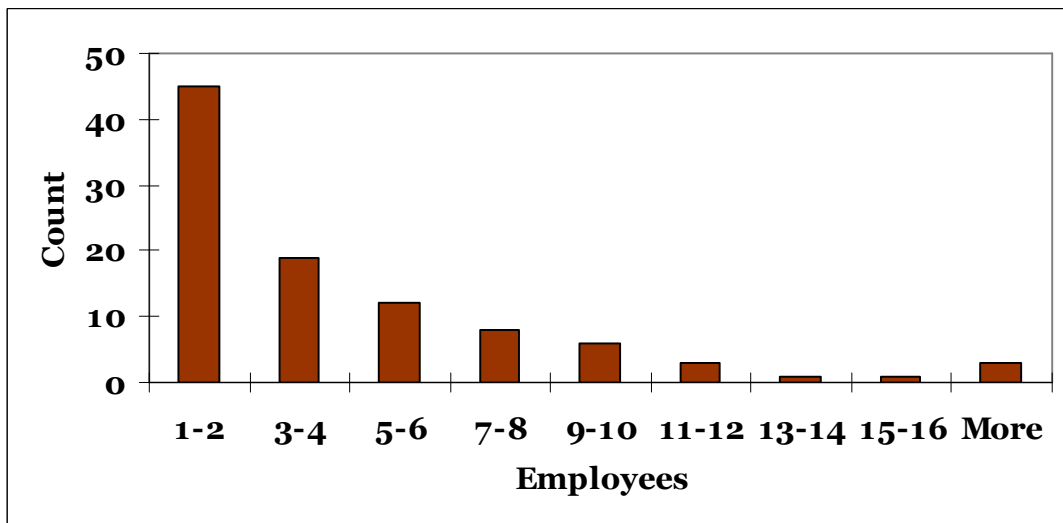
Total	Milking	Calf Feeding	Heifer Feeding	Feed Bunk Management/Mixing	Reproduction	Handling and Sorting	Equipment Operations
1	79	7	3	5	11	9	10
2	7	23	8	21	14	19	22
3	8	17	11	6	15	23	24
4	3	17	15	18	8	9	19
5	2	10	15	9	14	8	12
6	2	7	9	2	7	13	5
7	3	4	6	8	6	4	6
<i>Average Rank</i>	<i>1.65</i>	<i>3.44</i>	<i>4.22</i>	<i>3.62</i>	<i>3.60</i>	<i>3.51</i>	<i>3.41</i>

The top skills needed by employees are in Milking, Equipment Operations, Calf Feeding and Handling/Sorting.

Table 4
Do Participants Have Paid Employees

<u>Paid Employees</u>	<u>Number</u>
Yes	99
No	31
Total	130

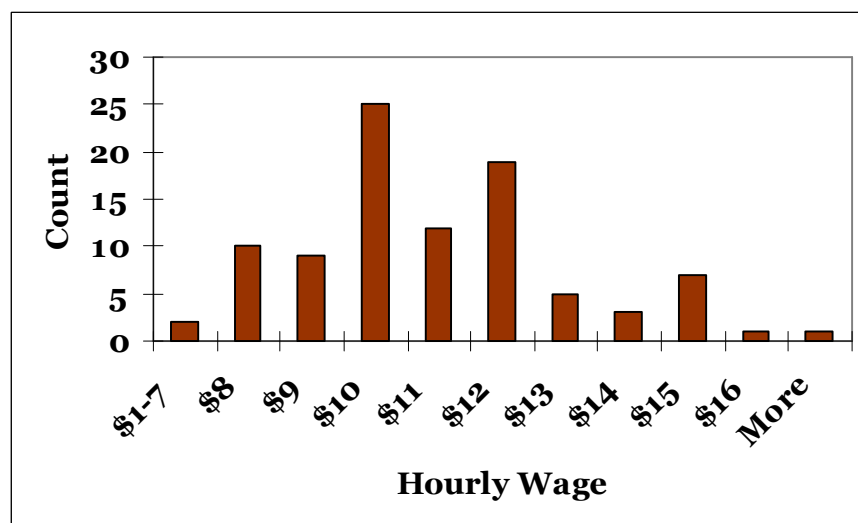
Chart 5
Number of Paid Employees



The average number of employees is 4.87, with a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 1. Chart 5 shows the data is skewed towards those employing a small number of people. Over 40 participants (n=98) responded with either 1 or 2 employees, and nearly 20 other participants responded with either 3 or 4 employees.

Participants were asked what they were expected to pay for an average employee, and they were given the options of an hourly or weekly rate. Few responded by providing an expected weekly salary and this does not indicate the number of hours worked per week. As a result, chart 6 uses only responses provided in the hourly rate form.

Chart 6
Expected Hourly Wage



The average expected hourly rate is \$10.90, with a maximum of \$20.00 and a minimum of \$2.00 per hour.

Table 5
Do Participants Currently Employ Herdspersons

<u>Herdspersons</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	35	37%
No	60	63%
Total	95	

Table 6
Would a pool of trained labor make your dairy business more successful?

<u>Labor Pool</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	54	48%
No	59	52%
Total	113	

What is the biggest challenge you face when trying to locate or hire a qualified employee?

- Don't need employee
- Common Sense and attention to detail
- Finding someone with good references- that haven't been fired, jailed, etc. Reliability
- Since I only need part-time, it can be a challenge, but I have a steady reliable help at this time
- We aren't big enough for other help
- Experience- finding someone who understands that dairying is 7 days a week and may not and probably will not have weekends off and time hours of day for milking
- Willing to work the demands of the dairy, dedicated persons
- Just try to find labor that is dependable and show up to work
- Too few hours to be a regular job- even part time- need some experience and willingness
- Language to communicate with Hispanics, quality herdsman, ability to have "choices" in employees with good work ethic
- Reliable Prospects
- Finding quality people
- No one wants to work the long hours, very few people pay attention to the small "details" that make a dairy profitable
- I do the work myself
- Someone with dairy experience
- Trust
- Experience
- Locating qualified people
- haven't had to try
- People responsible enough to show up on time and do what they say they can do
- To find part-time help
- Find them train them keep them
- Someone willing to work part-time- especially a.m. milkers
- Well trained employee
- I almost all the work myself
- Someone who is willing to work- Farming is not an 8-5 job/5 days a week, weekend/evening work is necessary
- Hiring trainable people who are reliable and affordable
- None

- Getting background information about them
- We are so far away from other Dairy farmers that our situation is different from everyone else- our biggest challenge is going to be able to market our milk at a reasonable price if other dairy farmers in our area quit.
- Finding anyone willing to milk
- None they all have came asking for work
- have not had a problem to this point
- Maintaining good revenue stream to pay help future \$13 milk will be below break even
- Need to speak Spanish and worry about green cards!!
- Give them enough pay to match the hours they work!
- The training process
- Willingness to work long hours/split shifts
- Finding someone who is willing to fit in with our small size heard operation. We don't have work to fill 8 hour shifts on a regular basis
- Finding someone that can and is willing to do the work and has a good attitude.
- Finding someone who wants to work with cattle- not just put time in for a pay check also someone willing to work non-traditional hours
- We Don't know of anyone interested in helping
- Finding one that knows the dairy business and can make some sound decisions
- Just finding someone who would do it no body wants to do farm work anymore
- Have no need at this time
- Locating on employee who is punctual has a good work ethic and a quiet personality. Any person we hire must have these 3 qualities, If an employee has these three qualities we can train them; our way, to perform any task we want them to do.
- Responsible to show up on time or even just to show up. Responsible to do their job, honest
- experience
- Not for my operation
- Just finding people who are reliable
- Finding someone to work with/along side me. I'm not a nice person to work with.
- Minimal hours needed, hours of day 10pm to 11pm
- Someone qualified and willing to work
- Poorly Trained help
- none
- Knowing how, always done all myself know no different
- someone dependable
- Being a small farmer, finances are the biggest limiting factor
- Herdsperson with expertise and affordable in a smaller herd
- Responsible, speaking English
- Location
- Out dated Immigration Laws with really no decent provisions for Dairy. For locals it is a monumental task to sort through all the unqualified candidates
- All family labor
- NA
- Hiring someone for a part time job 10 miles from town
- Have pretty good employees' hardest part in hiring now is people that won't work with cattle more than farm machinery
- Language
- No pool to draw from- totally on your own.
- We hire college kids, we have been lucky finding enough help
- finding high school age- individuals who want to work in a dairy environment
- Commitment and desire of people to work and learn.
- none
- Immigration, very small qualified labor pool, housing.
- Right now with the economy being poor hiring has not been a problem. That is our job to train them correctly.
- Dependable people, on time

- To develop a job description that matches the skills and training level of new person.
- people want easier jobs- very few farms kids in our area- info how to work with livestock
- finding people in the lock community who are actually "willing to work" most locals don't like to get dirty, don't like the hours, the work is too hard, "you can't pay me enough to do that kind of work" or other excuses.
- Ambition or desire to work these hours needed and weekends to, very basic problem.
- some one who will work odd hours
- Not a lot to choose from
- Finding people that know what the hell is happening!
- Always looking for good help. Right now we're lucky, have a good group of college and high school help.
- hours there needed to work
- Being dependable
- N/A Don't apply
- they would be interested in dairy business
- We need extra help, but can't afford someone full-time, the availability of good part-time help that could jump in and help us is hard to find.
- Some one who wants to work 7 days a week and hard hours.
- Kids are all in sports and are very busy

Herdspersons

The definition of a herdsperson, as provided on the original survey, is as follows: a **herdsperson** has skill to make certain management decisions on his/her own. He/She works with the owner managing the various aspects of the dairy operation. A herdsperson also brings certain/specific skills to improve the dairy, such as ability to observe fresh cows, treat cows, and breed cows.

Participants were asked to respond to a number of questions with this definition in mind. This data is displayed in tables 7-14.

Table 7
Knowledge of Anyone with a Desire to be a Herdsperson

	Desire	Count	Percent
Yes		28	24%
No		91	76%
Total		119	

Table 8
If Yes, Whom?

	Number
Yourself	3
Friend	4
Relative	11
Employee	9
Neighbor	1

Table 9
Are You Aware of Herdsperson Training Opportunities?

	Number	Percent
Yes	18	25.64%
No	63	74.36%
Total	81	

If yes, describe:

- Ridgewater College- Dairy Emphasis- Farm operation management
- different schools
- Ridgewater College
- He's currently at Ridgewater College, Willmar in Farm op/dairy Management class
- NeIowa-Calmer
- Willmar
- technical college- Willmar-Crookston
- Tech colleges such as Ridgewater or Iowa NEICC
- Ridgewater College
- Ridgewater College
- Ridgewater College
- College's
- Some of the tech schools
- Adult Farm Management program/ county extension office
- Several Ag. Colleges in 100 mi. radius on our dairy
- Ridgewater
- Calmer school
- Phizer has done some excellent classes that one Bi-lingual U of M has a short course. Monsanto did some training.
- 2yr. Programs in MN and WI
- Ridgewater College
- yes in future
- Ridge water campus- Willmar
- NE Iowa Technical College
- Ridgewater school
- Cal-Mar, Iowa

Table 10
Would an association of herdspersons be of interest?

	Number	Percent
Yes	53	47%
No	59	53%
Total	112	

Table 11
Would you provide an internship for a new herds person?

	Number	Percent
Yes	49	44%
No	63	56%
Total	112	

Table 12 displays the responses to who holds responsibility for various tasks *today*. Table 13 displays who respondents believe will be responsible for these same tasks in the *future*. Table 14 displays the percentage change between responses for today and the future.

Please note that for tables 12 and 13, respondents could provide more than one response for an individual task. As a result, the number of responses for each task differs, as do the percentages provided based on these totals.

Table 12
Task Responsibility Today

Today	Owner	Herds person	Other	Not Applicable	N
Milking	86 (78.2%)	27 (24.5%)	30 (27.3%)	1 (0.9%)	110
Mastitis knowledge	92 (83.6%)	35 (31.8%)	26 (23.6%)	1 (0.9%)	109
Basic Nutrition	87 (79.1%)	16 (14.5%)	21 (19.1%)	1 (0.9%)	108
Feed Bunk Management/ Feed Mixing	81 (73.6%)	16 (14.5%)	28 (25.5%)	5 (4.5%)	109
Housing, Bedding, and Ventilation	87 (79.1%)	20 (18.2%)	20 (18.2%)	2 (1.8%)	110
Calf feeding and Young stock management	74 (67.3%)	18 (16.4%)	38 (34.5%)	3 (2.7%)	108
Vaccination, Heath and Treatment	82 (74.5%)	29 (26.4%)	17 (15.5%)	1 (0.9%)	108
Locomotion and Hoof Care	53 (48.2%)	34 (30.9%)	19 (17.3%)	4 (3.6%)	106
Handling and Sorting	75 (68.2%)	30 (27.3%)	36 (32.7%)	2 (1.8%)	108
Body Scoring	43 (39.1%)	10 (9.1%)	33 (30%)	24 (21.8%)	105
Genetics and Mating	53 (48.2%)	13 (11.8%)	50 (45.5%)	5 (4.5%)	106
Heat Detection	86 (78.2%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	3 (2.7%)	110
Artificial Insemination	61 (55.5%)	20 (18.2%)	38 (34.5%)	5 (4.5%)	109
Reproduction	75 (68.2%)	25 (22.7%)	21 (19.1%)	3 (2.7%)	105
Herd Record Keeping	84 (76.4%)	18 (16.4%)	20 (18.2%)	2 (1.8%)	110
Financial Record Keeping and Analysis	96 (87.3%)	5 (4.5%)	17 (15.5%)	0 (0%)	110
Crop Production for Dairy Feed	93 (84.5%)	7 (6.4%)	19 (17.3%)	2 (1.8%)	107
Specialized Management for Free Stall Facilities	43 (39.1%)	16 (14.5%)	9 (8.2%)	45 (40.9%)	97
Specialized Management for Grazing Dairies	17 (15.5%)	6 (5.5%)	1 (0.9%)	67 (60.9%)	87
Specialized Management for Organic Dairies	9 (8.2%)	4 (3.6%)	1 (0.9%)	77 (70%)	87

Table 13
Task Responsibility in the Future

Future	Owner	Herdsperson	Other	Not Applicable	N
Milking	41 (45.1%)	32 (35.2%)	39 (42.9%)	1 (1.1%)	91
Mastitis knowledge	51 (56%)	41 (45.1%)	27 (29.7%)	1 (1.1%)	89
Basic Nutrition	60 (65.9%)	26 (28.6%)	19 (20.9%)	1 (1.1%)	88
Feed Bunk Management/ Feed Mixing	51 (56%)	27 (29.7%)	29 (31.9%)	3 (3.3%)	90
Housing, Bedding, and Ventilation	54 (59.3%)	31 (34.1%)	23 (25.3%)	1 (1.1%)	89
Calf feeding and Young stock management	45 (49.5%)	24 (26.4%)	41 (45.1%)	2 (2.2%)	89
Vaccination, Heath and Treatment	49 (53.8%)	40 (44%)	18 (19.8%)	2 (2.2%)	88
Locomotion and Hoof Care	34 (37.4%)	29 (31.9%)	38 (41.8%)	3 (3.3%)	89
Handling and Sorting	46 (50.5%)	39 (42.9%)	31 (34.1%)	5 (5.5%)	88
Body Scoring	27 (29.7%)	23 (25.3%)	28 (30.8%)	15 (16.5%)	87
Genetics and Mating	33 (36.3%)	23 (25.3%)	37 (40.7%)	5 (5.5%)	87
Heat Detection	53 (58.2%)	46 (50.5%)	19 (20.9%)	4 (4.4%)	89
Artificial Insemination	36 (39.6%)	35 (38.5%)	26 (28.6%)	4 (4.4%)	88
Reproduction	46 (50.5%)	42 (46.2%)	16 (17.6%)	5 (5.5%)	86
Herd Record Keeping	55 (60.4%)	31 (34.1%)	12 (13.2%)	4 (4.4%)	87
Financial Record Keeping and Analysis	70 (76.9%)	5 (5.5%)	16 (17.6%)	3 (3.3%)	88
Crop Production for Dairy Feed	70 (76.9%)	10 (11%)	18 (19.8%)	9 (9.9%)	88
Specialized Management for Free Stall Facilities	27 (29.7%)	25 (27.5%)	14 (15.4%)	32 (35.2%)	80
Specialized Management for Grazing Dairies	10 (11%)	6 (6.6%)	4 (4.4%)	53 (58.2%)	70
Specialized Management for Organic Dairies	6 (6.6%)	4 (4.4%)	3 (3.3%)	57 (62.6%)	67

Table 14
Percentage Change in Responsibility

Change	Owner	Herdsperson	Other
Milking	33.13%	-10.62%	-15.58%
Mastitis knowledge	27.59%	-13.24%	-6.03%
Basic Nutrition	13.16%	-14.03%	-1.79%
Feed Bunk Management/ Feed Mixing	17.59%	-15.12%	-6.41%
Housing, Bedding, and Ventilation	19.75%	-15.88%	-7.09%
Calf feeding and Young stock management	17.82%	-10.01%	-10.51%
Vaccination, Heath and Treatment	20.70%	-17.59%	-4.33%
Locomotion and Hoof Care	10.82%	-0.96%	-24.49%
Handling and Sorting	17.63%	-15.58%	-1.34%
Body Scoring	9.42%	-16.18%	-0.77%
Genetics and Mating	11.92%	-13.46%	4.80%
Heat Detection	19.94%	-19.64%	1.85%
Artificial Insemination	15.89%	-20.28%	5.97%
Reproduction	17.63%	-23.43%	1.51%
Herd Record Keeping	15.92%	-17.70%	5.00%
Financial Record Keeping and Analysis	10.35%	-0.95%	-2.13%
Crop Production for Dairy Feed	7.62%	-4.63%	-2.51%
Specialized Management for Free Stall Facilities	9.42%	-12.93%	-7.20%
Specialized Management for Grazing Dairies	4.47%	-1.14%	-3.49%
Specialized Management for Organic Dairies	1.59%	-0.76%	-2.39%

Interest in Herdsperson Association

In this section we will focus specifically on the information presented in table 10. Responses to the question “if an association/guild of herdspersons existed providing a qualified labor pool, would this be of interest?” were split into two groups, those who responded “yes” and those who responded “no.” These will be referred to as **interested** respondents (interested in an association) and **not interested** respondents respectively. Please note that discrepancies exist between the total number of responses for the sample and total number of responses for this population.

Respondents interested in an association tended to have larger herds. Not interested respondents had an average herd size of 77.92, while the average herd size for interested respondents 238.02. Additionally, both groups reported an increase in total number of cows between five years ago and today. However, interested respondents had a much larger increase (31.3%) than not interested respondents (6.5%).

The type of dairy operation differed between the two groups as well. Over half of no respondents (57.5%) reported a Tie-Stall/Stanchion operation, where over half of yes respondents (52.1%) reported a Free-Stall operation. The distribution of operation type is provided in table 15 below.

Table 15
Operation Type by Interest

Operation Type	No Respondents	Yes Respondents
Compost/Bedding Housing	7	14
Grazing	7	6
Organic	1	1
Free-Stall	16	37
Tie-Stall/Stanchion	42	13
Total	73	71

The following table contains responses to whether participants would be willing to provide a farm internship opportunity for a new herdsperson.

Table 16
Provide Internship by Interest

Provide Internship	Yes	No
Interested	38	13
Not Interested	8	48
Total	46	61

Table 17
Paid Employees by Interest

Paid Employees	Yes	No
Interested	52	1
Not Interested	38	21
Total	90	22

Table 18 contains responses for how many employees participants have. The average, minimum, and maximum are provided.

Table 18
Number of Employees by Interest

Paid Employees	Average	Min	Max
Interested	6.17	1	50
Not Interested	3.08	1	12

Table 19 contains responses to the question, “are you aware of any herds person training opportunities?”

Table 19
Awareness of Training by Interest

Paid Employees	Yes	No
Interested	16	34
Not Interested	11	48
Total	27	82

Listed below are responses to the question, “what is the biggest challenge you face when trying to locate or hire a qualified employee?”

Interested

- Finding someone with good references- that haven't been fired, jailed, etc. Reliability
- Experience- finding someone who understands that dairying is 7 days a week and may not and probably will not have weekends off and time hours of day for milking
- Language to communicate with Hispanics, quality herdsman, ability to have "choices" in employees with good work ethic
- Reliable Prospects
- No one wants to work the long hours, very few people pay attention to the small "details" that make a dairy profitable
- experience
- Locating qualified people
- Find them train them keep them
- Well trained employee
- I almost all the work myself
- Getting background information about them
- Finding anyone willing to milk
- have not had a problem to this point
- Maintaining good revenue stream to pay help future \$13 milk will be below break even
- Need to speak Spanish and worry about green cards!!
- here available in our location
- Give them enough pay to match the hours they work!
- The training process
- Willingness to work long hours/split shifts
- Finding someone who is willing to fit in with our small size heard operation. We don't have work to fill 8 hour shifts on a regular basis
- Finding someone that can and is willing to do the work and has a good attitude.
- Finding someone who wants to work with cattle- not just put time in for a pay check also someone willing to work non-traditional hours
- We Don't know of anyone interested in helping
- Finding one that knows the dairy business and can make some sound decisions
- Responsible to show up on time or even just to show up. Responsible to do their job, honest

- experience
- Just finding people who are reliable
- Someone qualified and willing to work
- Poorly Trained help
- Knowing how, always done all myself know no different
- someone dependable
- Herdperson with expertise and affordable in a smaller herd
- Responsible, speaking English
- Location
- Out dated Immigration Laws with really no decent provisions for Dairy. For locals it is a monumental task to sort through all the unqualified candidates
- Hiring someone for a part time job 10 miles from town
- Language
- No pool to draw from- totally on your own.
- We hire college kids, we have been lucky finding enough help
- Commitment and desire of people to work and learn.
- none
- Right now with the economy being poor hiring has not been a problem. That is our job to train them correctly.
- To develop a job description that matches the skills and training level of new person.
- finding people in the lock community who are actually "willing to work" most locals don't like to get dirty, don't like the hours, the work is too hard, "you can't pay me enough to do that kind of work" or other excuses.
- Not a lot to choose from
- Finding people that know what the hell is happening!
- Always looking for good help. Right now we're lucky, have a good group of college and high school help.
- hours there needed to work
- they would be interested in dairy business
- We need extra help, but can't afford someone full-time, the availability of good part-time help that could jump in and help us is hard to find.

Not Interested

- Don't need employee
- Common Sense and attention to detail
- Since I only need part-time, it can be a challenge, but I have a steady reliable help at this time
- Willing to work the demands of the dairy, dedicated persons
- Too few hours to be a regular job- even part time- need some experience and willingness
- Finding quality people
- I do the work myself
- Someone with dairy experience
- haven't had to try
- People responsible enough to show up on time and do what they say they can do
- To find part-time help
- Someone willing to work part-time- especially am milkers
- Someone who is willing to work- Farming is not an 8-5 job/5 days a week, weekend/evening work is necessary
- Hiring trainable people who are reliable and affordable
- None
- We are so far away from other Dairy farmers that our situation is different from everyone else- our biggest challenge is going to be able to market our milk at a reasonable price if other dairy farmers in our area quit.
- None they all have came asking for work
- Just finding someone who would do it no body wants to do farm work anymore

- Have no need at this time
- Locating an employee who is punctual has a good work ethic and a quiet personality. Any person we hire must have these 3 qualities, If an employee has these three qualities we can train them; our way, to perform any task we want them to do.
- Not for my operation
- Finding someone to work with/along side me. I'm not a nice person to work with.
- none
- Being a small farmer, finances are the biggest limiting factor
- All family labor
- NA
- Dependable people, on time
- people want easier jobs- very few farms kids in our area- info how to work with livestock
- Ambition or desire to work these hours needed and weekends to, very basic problem.
- some one who will work odd hours
- Being dependable
- N/A Don't apply
- Some one who wants to work 7 days a week and hard hours.
- Kids are all in sports and are very busy

APPENDIX A: Responses by County

Responses by County

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>		
Stearns	19	Chisago	1
Winona	10	Clearwater	1
Ottertail	9	Cottonwood	1
Benton	6	Douglas	1
Goodhue	6	Hennepin	1
Morrison	6	Houston	1
Pine	6	Hubbard	1
Todd	6	Isanti	1
Fillmore	5	Jackson	1
Wright	4	Lincoln	1
Brown	3	Mahnomen	1
Olmsted	3	Mille Lacs	1
Crow Wing	2	Mower	1
Dakota	2	Nobles	1
Dodge	2	Norman	1
Kandiyohi	2	Olmsted	1
Lac Qui Parle	2	Polk	1
Meeker	2	Pope	1
Nicollet	2	Red Lake	1
Pennington	2	Renville	1
Steele	2	Rice	1
Wabasha	2	Scott	1
Becker	1	Sibley	1
Blue Earth	1	St Louis	1
Carlton	1	Waseca	1
Carver	1	Washington	1
		Wilkin	1

APPENDIX B: Survey Instrument

Dairy Owner Survey Minnesota Milk Producers Association

1. How long have you been in dairy production (in years)? _____
2. What county(s) is your dairy operation located in? _____
3. What is the size of your milking herd?
 - a. Today: _____
 - b. Five years ago: _____
4. What type of dairy operation do you own? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Compost / Bedded Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Free-Stall
<input type="checkbox"/> Grazing	<input type="checkbox"/> Tie-Stall / Stanchion
<input type="checkbox"/> Organic	
5. In the next five years, what changes do you have planned for your dairy? (circle all that apply)

	<i>Timeframe (in years)</i>
a. Retire	_____
b. Sell	_____
c. Expand	_____
d. maintain existing structure	_____
e. transfer, if so to whom?	_____
f. improve/increase productivity	_____
6. How long do you plan to continue to dairy farm? _____
7. Other than yourself, do you have any paid employees (including family and non-family)?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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If yes, how many? _____

Would you consider any of your employees to be herdspersons?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No (see next page for the definition of herdsperson)
------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
8. Would your dairy business be more successful if there were a pool of trained employees from which to draw labor needs? Yes No
9. What is the biggest challenge you face when trying to locate or hire a qualified employee?

10. If you were to hire an employee on your farm, which of these skills do you look for? Please rank from most needed skills (1) to least needed skills (7). Also, place an X in the box if it is a skill you will not look for.

	RANK	Example
a) Milking		1
b) Calf Feeding		X
c) Heifer Feeding		X
d) Feed Bunk Management / Mixing		X
e) Reproduction		4
f) Handling and Sorting		3
g) Equipment Operation		2

11. What would you expect to pay for an average employee described above?
 \$_____ per hour or salary of \$_____ per week

*A **herdsperson** has skill to make certain management decisions on his/her own. He/She works with the owner managing the various aspects of the dairy operation. A herdsperson also brings certain/specific skills to improve the dairy, such as ability to observe fresh cows, treat cows, and breed cows.*

12. Do you know someone who has a desire to be a herdsperson? Yes No

If Yes, then who? (circle) Yourself/Friend/Relative/Employee/Neighbor

13. Are you aware of any herdsperson training opportunities? Yes No

If yes, describe_____

14. If an association/guild of herdspersons existed providing a qualified labor pool, would this be of interest? Yes No

15. Would you be willing to provide an on farm internship opportunity for a new herdsperson? Yes No

16. Please place an X in the box that corresponds with the person that has the responsibility for each of the items listed below. We are interested in identifying who is responsible TODAY and who you believe will be responsible in the FUTURE, say 5 years from now.

TODAY					FUTURE			
Owner	Herdsperson	Other	Not Applicable		Owner	Herdsperson	Other	Not Applicable
				1) Milking				
				2) Mastitis knowledge				
				3) Basic Nutrition				
				4) Feed Bunk Management/ Feed Mixing				
				5) Housing, Bedding, and Ventilation				
				6) Calf feeding and Young stock management				
				7) Vaccination, Heath and Treatment				
				8) Locomotion and Hoof Care				
				9) Handling and Sorting				
				10) Body Scoring				
				11) Genetics and Mating				
				12) Heat Detection				
				13) Artificial Insemination				
				14) Reproduction				
				15) Herd Record Keeping				
				16) Financial Record Keeping and Analysis				
				17) Crop Production for Dairy Feed				
				18) Specialized Management for Free Stall Facilities				
				19) Specialized Management for Grazing Dairies				
				20) Specialized Management for Organic Dairies				