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Farming with my Team

SESSION 1:

WHAT LEADERSHIP MEANS

“Inspiring People to improve through new knowledge and skills”

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**“The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get if first”**

**Lyanla Vanzant**

# Session 1: What leadership means

## Welcome

Welcome to Farming with my Team.

Over the next few months we will explore what it means to be a leader on-farm and why that is important for the future of the dairy industry and why that is particularly important for the health and well-being of your farm.

Running a dairy farm can be looked at through a management or functional lens that sees the effective running of a farm in terms of planning, production, personnel, costs, contracts, supply chains, land and herd management.

We can also look at running a dairy farm through a people lens. The fact is, ignoring any industry automation that may be present, all of the management functions mentioned before require people to execute them. These people are making decisions, following processes, working as part of one or more teams. Each and every person who works on-farm brings their lived experience to work every day. This includes their energy and enthusiasm, their knowledge and expertise, the diversity of their personality and how they see the world, their thoughts and their feelings.

Getting the best from people and harnessing all that individuals have to offer requires leadership.

### Activity: Defining leadership

How would you define leadership? In the space below write down one or two sentences that for you define what leadership is.

## Leadership and Vision

As we will explore during this course, leadership is fundamentally about leading people towards achieving a purpose. This is often referred to as the ‘vision’ and is future focused. This vision is articulated by the leader and shared with the leader’s followers. Leaders inspire others to believe in and work towards making the vision a reality. The vision is tied into the strategy of the farm and the vision is achieved through the establishment and achievement of short, medium and long term goals and in establishing ways of working that are ‘vision’ focused.

### Activity: What is the farms vision?

What are the medium term goals for your farm?

What are the long term goals for your farm?

How do you let your dairy workers know about and share in the vision for your farm?

## Characteristics of a Leader

### Activity: Leader Characteristics

Brainstorm the top nine qualities that characterise a leader.

## When dairy farmers lead

### Activity: When do dairy farmers lead?

Now that we have explored what leadership is and some the characteristics of leadership, it is time for some self-reflection on when leadership takes place on and off farm. In this activity you will be split into smaller teams. You will discuss within your team where the opportunities are to demonstrate leadership. Think broadly about the range of people that farmers come into contact with and therefore what opportunities there could be for leadership. Write down a sentence to describe what the leadership opportunity looks like and record the results of your discussion below. Nominate someone in your team to give a summary of your discussion to the wider group

What are the opportunities for leadership on-farm?

What are opportunities for leadership off-farm?

## Leading and Managing

Management

Leadership

**and**

Leadership and management are not the same thing, however they are necessarily linked, and complementary.

In his 1989 book “On Becoming a Leader,” Warren Bennis composed a list of the differences:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Management** | **Leadership** |
| The manager administers | The leader innovates |
| The manager is a copy | The leader is an original |
| The manager maintains | The leader develops |
| The manager focuses on systems and structure | The leader focuses on people |
| The manager relies on control | The leader inspires trust |
| The manager has a short-range view | The leader has a long-range perspective |
| The manager asks how and when | The leader asks what and why. |
| The manager has his or her eye always on the bottom line | The leader’s eye is on the horizon |
| The manager imitates | The leader originates |
| The manager accepts the status quo | The leader challenges it |
| The manager is the classic good soldier | The leader is his or her own person |
| The manager does things right | The leader does the right thing |

### Activity: Do you Manage, or do you Lead?

What portion of your time do you spend managing? What things do you manage?

What portion of your time do you spend leading? How do you demonstrate leadership?

## What farm workers think of their leaders

A survey conducted in NSW asked a series of questions on ‘On-Farm Leadership’ that focused on the following areas:

* Identifying opportunities for on-farm improvements
* Leading staff development on-farm
* On-farm goals, plans and processes
* Achieving outcomes through influencing people
* Communication

This survey was completed by farm employees.

According to the survey results, the following are the leadership skills in which most farm leaders are doing well (i.e. there is agreement between the importance placed on the skill by the respondents and the extent to which the farm leader is demonstrating the capability)

* Is involved in dairy industry groups outside of the farm business
* Encourage me to work/interact with a variety of people, including consultants, suppliers, service providers and customers.
* Encourages me to take on activities that challenge me
* Clearly informs me of the farm policies and I understand how to follow them
* Works/interacts with a variety of people, including consultants, suppliers, service providers and customers.
* Takes an active leadership in the wider dairy industry
* Confidently uses technology to communicate and connect teams on-farm

These are the skills that had the biggest gap between the importance placed on them by respondents and the extent to which the farm leader was not demonstrating them.

* Deals well with conflict resolution
* Recognises and rewards excellence in work and achievements of people on-farm
* Clearly communicates tasks and needs, with little to no room for misunderstanding
* Mentors/coaches
* Creates a good workplace culture of trust and working together as a farm team
* Has an awareness of how their behaviour impacts on others, particularly farm staff and myself
* Supports me to develop my career goals
* Discusses learning opportunities (e.g. extension workshops, education, skill development) with me to achieve my career goals
* Has informed me of the vision for the farm and has outlined goals for the farm to achieve this vision
* Provides me with useful feedback on how I can improve myself at work

### Activity: What can I take from this survey?

Reflect on the survey results and record below what they mean for the dairy industry and for you personally.

Survey results reflecting what farm leaders in general are doing well.

Survey results reflecting where farm leaders in general need to improve.

Survey results reflecting what I as a leader am doing well.

Survey results reflecting where I as a leader need to improve.

# Post Session Activities

## Action Journal

Your Action Journal is a chronological personal record of your reflections as you move through this course and what actions you will commit to, to improve as a leader. A Journal is another mode of self-reflection and is a vehicle to promote self-awareness and self-improvement.

At the end of each session you will be encouraged to reflect on what was covered and decide what actions you will take to lead more effectively.

## Self-reflection on leadership attributes

One of the essential characteristics of authentic leadership is self-awareness. Self-awareness is an ability to recognise your own abilities, characteristics and drivers - and to do so objectively. Self-reflection is taking time out to think deeply about you – who you are and how you interact with the world through your thoughts feelings and actions. Self-reflection is an essential skill of leadership. If you want others to follow your lead then you need to understand what it is about how you lead that will encourage or inspire followership.

In this activity you will be presented with a list of leadership attributes to evaluate and decide which of them you demonstrate and which of them you would like to demonstrate more often but currently don’t.