



# Leadership, Communication and Understanding People

Discusses the importance and necessary nature of leadership, communication and understanding people within a business

- What is leadership
- The difference between leadership and management
- Four characteristics of admired leaders
- Five practices of leadership
- How to practice leadership in your farm business
- Personal leadership
- Effective questioning
- Listening
- Giving feedback
- Barriers to communication
- Other communication hints
- Motivation
- Human development and work-life stages
- Understanding personality
- Stress + coping

# 6.1 Leadership

## Guiding and empowering people to work towards a shared vision

### Why this is important

Businesses and people need leadership to survive and grow. Leadership is vital to all organisational success – both for large farming businesses and for small farming businesses. Good leadership can be the difference between an average business and an outstanding one.

#### This fact sheet will cover:

- What is leadership?
- The difference between leadership and management
- Four characteristics of admired leaders
- Five practices of leadership
- How to practise leadership in your farm business
- Personal leadership

### What is leadership?

Leadership has been described as “the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations”<sup>1</sup>. Leadership is about creating a vision for the future and then enabling people to do what they need to do to make the future vision a reality.

Leadership has a values component. It is vital that leaders adhere to a strong set of values and that they activate and enlist others by understanding and appealing to their own values, hopes and dreams.

In larger organisations it can be possible to divide management roles and leadership roles, where there are enough people involved in the business to spread these responsibilities. However in the average New Zealand sheep and beef farming operation, it is necessary for the business manager(s) to have a combination of both leadership and managerial skills.

### The difference between leadership and management

The following list shows that for many of the tasks and responsibilities of management there is an equivalent responsibility for the leadership role<sup>2</sup>.



Management	Leadership
Administers	Innovates
Focuses on systems and structures	Focuses on people
Maintains	Develops
Relies on control	Inspires trust
Has a short-range view	Has a long-range perspective
Asks how and when	Asks what and when
Has their eye on the bottom line	Has their eye on the horizon
Does things right	Does the right things

Essentially the leadership role takes a big picture view of the business, while the managerial role is more focused on the day-to-day operations.

### Four characteristics of admired leaders<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Honesty:** 90% of people value honesty in a leader above all other behaviours. People want to consistently see honesty in their leaders' behaviour
- 2. Being forward-looking:** People expect leaders to have a sense of direction with clarity and purpose. A long-term vision of the future is part of being forward-looking
- 3. Being inspiring:** A leader needs to communicate their vision and be energetic and positive about the future
- 4. Being competent:** Leaders need to be competent in the technical aspects of their business, but still have the ability to challenge the norm of the way things are done.

Leaders must also "walk the talk". This means they must always be prepared to be fully committed to and involved in whatever the organisation is working towards.

### Five practices of leadership<sup>2</sup>

- 1. Challenge the process:** Leaders search for opportunities to change, grow and improve upon the way that things are usually done
- 2. Inspiring a shared vision:** Leaders visualise a positive future and enlist the efforts of others to achieve the future vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes and dreams
- 3. Enabling others to act:** Leaders foster cooperation in their team by building an environment of trust and they strengthen others by sharing information and power
- 4. Modelling the way:** Leaders set an example for others by behaving in a way that is consistent with their stated values.
- 5. Encouraging:** Leaders recognise individual contributions and celebrate team accomplishments.

### How to practice leadership in your farm business

Ideas for improving leadership of your farm business can include:

- Share your farm vision
- Take a mindset of responsibility for the mistakes of others. Consider how a lack of leadership or direction may have contributed to errors
- Develop an aura of professionalism

- Consider your behaviour in the community as a whole – do you behave appropriately on all occasions?
- Develop a culture where people can make mistakes and still be supported to grow through them
- Provide opportunities for others to take a leadership role
- Employees can show leadership by being pro-active in looking for opportunities to grow.

## Personal leadership

Personal leadership refers to the idea that all people have the ability to take on a leadership role. This means that leadership behaviours like integrity, forward thinking, working towards common values etc can be taken on by every person, including employees and owners of businesses that do not employ staff.

For employees, recognition of the fact that they have a personal leadership role within the business where they are working can be motivating and increase job satisfaction.

Good employers will look for opportunities to develop the personal leadership styles of their employees. This helps create a win-win working environment with many benefits for the employer.

## What are the benefits to me?

Practising and improving your leadership skills can have a huge effect on the success of your business and on the quality of your staff relationships. Strong and effective leadership helps businesses and people grow and move forward.

### What do I do next?

Some ideas can include:

- Read books listed in the useful references section of this fact sheet
- Attend some leadership training
- Make a business plan
- Watch other people who demonstrate effective leadership.

A lack of willingness to act as the leader of your business will make business growth and dealing with staff difficult and less enjoyable.

### Useful references

**The Leadership Challenge**, <sup>1</sup> Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, P.Z. USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.

**On Becoming a Leader**, <sup>2</sup> Bennis, W., , Addison-Wesley 1989.

**Leadership and the One Minute Manager**, Blanchard, Kenneth, , Fontana 1987.

**The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, Covey, S. R., , Business Library, 1990

**Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway**, Jeffers, Susan, Century, 1987.

## 6.2 Communication

### The key to gaining a common understanding

#### Why this is important

Communication is the glue that holds businesses together. From day-to-day running of the business through to creating high-performing teams, communication is critical.

Communication is so important that it has been identified as the most important ingredient for a high-performing culture.

The greatest advantage of good communication is motivated staff. This comes as a result of staff knowing what is going on and what is expected of them, and feeling their ideas are valued and their performance praised.

#### This fact sheet will cover

- Effective questioning
- Listening
- Giving feedback
- Barriers to communication
- Other communication hints

Good communication is about people being able to verbalise what they are thinking and then having other people hear and understand what they have said.

While this process may sound straightforward, poor communication and communication breakdowns are common in all working environments - sheep and beef farms being no different.

#### Effective questioning

Questioning people in a non-threatening and effective manner is a good way to make communication happen. Effective questioning supports people in finding areas of common interest and builds relationships.

To use questions to improve communication it is helpful to understand that questions can be closed or open.

**Closed questions** are questions that can only be answered with a yes, a no, or with only a few words. Using closed questions in a conversation has the effect of limiting conversation. In order to get conversation flowing, try asking open questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no response.

**Open questions** tend to start with these key words:

<b>How</b>	<b>What</b>
<b>When</b>	<b>Why</b>
<b>Which</b>	<b>Where</b>

## Listening

### Careful listening is vital to effective communication.

The role of the listener in a conversation is an active role and requires effort on the part of the listener. This will ensure that the listener hears what the speaker is saying and not what the listener expects the speaker to be saying. Active listening techniques to help communication include:

- a) Be supportive. Positive body language such as eye contact, nodding of the head and verbal cues help support a speaker and encourages them to talk
- b) Use open questions to encourage further communication
- c) Allow silences to develop as a pause will encourage the other person to fill in the gap.

Listening carefully will provide clues as to what interests a person has and “what matters most” to them. Signs that a “hot button” has been hit will be an increase in the pace of speech, more animated talk and more gestures used.

## Giving feedback

Giving feedback on work performance is an essential part of communication in a working relationship. Feedback ensures that work standards are met and is also an opportunity to praise people when standards are exceeded. Feedback can be in the form of praise or corrective feedback.

### Giving praise

- Recognition of a job well done is one of the most satisfying aspects of an employee's work and ranks well ahead of money in terms of factors contributing to job satisfaction
- Praise provides recognition and is critical to ongoing motivation
- Regular praise motivates and builds trust and loyalty in people
- Can be given in front of others and to others without the individual present, i.e positive gossip
- Praise must be specific and attached to a particular action or piece of good work so that it has real meaning
- For motivational purposes it's also important to give praise to people when they do things well even if the rest of their work is not up to scratch
- When any negatives do have to be expressed it's a lot easier if praise has been forthcoming.

### Corrective feedback

- When things are going wrong it is important to deal with the issue as quickly as possible to avoid small problems becoming large ones
- Corrective feedback aims at getting the job done to the expected standard
- Handled properly, corrective feedback can be motivating for employees, as people generally want to perform well provided they believe they are being well treated
- The key to corrective feedback is to make sure that a lack of training or resource has not led to the problem arising
- A well-recognised model for giving feedback is the “I like... I would like” model. This starts out with the statement “I like...” and commends the person for things they are doing well. Using positive introductions makes people less defensive and more receptive toward change. This is followed up with “I would like...” and recommendations as to what the person must do to meet performance expectations
- Also sandwich approach - positive, constructive, positive.

Once again, be specific about the behaviour and remember that the feedback is about behaviour and should not be a personal attack (for more information on giving feedback see the Performance Management Fact Sheet).

## Barriers to communication

Poor communication can lead to de-motivated staff and frustrated employers. Among the top reasons for failed communication are:

- **Preconceptions and bias:** This is where one or both parties have strong opposing opinions or make assumptions about the other person without taking the opportunity to listen with an open mind.
- **Personality issues:** Personality clashes do arise and make it difficult for people to converse. Such issues need to be dealt with as soon as they become apparent, otherwise the rest of the workplace will suffer (refer to the Understanding People Fact Sheet 6.3).
- **Environment:** The environment in which we communicate influences the quality of the communication. Talking in a noisy woolshed or beside a running tractor is likely to mean people find it difficult to listen. Other distractions such as mobile phones also detract from full communication.

## Other communication hints

### Making sure everybody understands

We all listen to varying extents depending on concentration spans, stress levels, the environment and the person doing the talking. For effective communication to take place it is important to make sure that both parties truly understand what they have heard.

Checking on understanding can be done by:

- Getting the person listening to summarise the conversation back
- Asking open questions about what has been communicated.

A good strategy when giving instructions is to ask the person what they know about the subject first. This gives them the opportunity to contribute rather than just being told what to do. It also provides the opportunity to identify any bad habits.

### Saying what you mean

Often we can be thinking one thing but can communicate another. To ensure you are effectively communicating your point, these sentence prompts may be useful:

- "Here is my view and here is how I arrived at it. How does this sound to you?"
- "What makes sense to you and what does not?"
- "Do you see any ways I could improve this?"

### Understanding what's not being said

Often during a conversation, people will steer away from certain topics. Listening for omissions or for changes of subject around some issues will provide clues that further investigation needs to occur.

Body language provides other clues as to what is going on in people's minds. If somebody is understanding and agreeing, they will display behaviours such as nodding the head, adopting a similar and open body posture and offering agreement in speech.

If they are not in agreement then they will display behaviours such as looking away, folded arms and either keeping quiet or openly disagreeing. In this case it is important to review why agreement has not been reached by exploring the other person's point of view and the motivations behind that view.

### Keeping staff informed

The following ideas can be used to keep staff informed:

- Have frequent and regular catch-up meetings
- Make time to chat to staff
- Manage by walking about.

Meetings don't need to be too formal but should be regular, to inform staff of what is happening. This is reinforced by talking to staff as individuals as the opportunity arises. Management by walking about means keeping a good overview of what is happening by walking about observing progress and talking to staff.

## What are the benefits to me?

**The benefits of good communication in a workplace include:**

- Increased satisfaction among staff, so they know what is going on and what is expected of them
- A more pleasant working environment as a result of issues being dealt with promptly
- Improved staff retention and increased productivity.

### What do I do next?

- Evaluate how well communication presently occurs on the farm in meetings and general discussion
- If communication is at a low level then schedule in some time just for "improving communication". Use open questions to get staff talking
- To improve questioning and listening skills, managers may wish to consider attending workshops.

## Useful references

***Problem People at Work and How To Deal With Them***, Marilyn Wheeler

***Management by Effective Listening***, Kevin J Murphy

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## 6.3 Understanding People

### Making staff management easier through knowledge of human behaviour

#### Why this is important

To create a good working environment on a farm, people need to be able to see each other as more than just “workers” on the farm. Farm managers and staff need to have some knowledge of people and their behaviour in order to work to the strengths of the people in the team and to manage weaknesses.

Diversity in a team is an asset when each team member is given the opportunity to make their best contribution to the work environment. Understanding behaviour will help employers accept differences in their staff and create environments in which their staff can function to the best of their best ability. The information in this fact sheet can help make sense of staff behaviour that at times may seem senseless.

Understanding people will also help employees get along with their employer and their peers and find success in their employment experiences.

Understanding people is a skill. It is an ongoing process that is never complete. This fact sheet is simply a starting point to some parts of human behaviour that can affect work environments. This information is general and further reading is recommended.

#### This fact sheet will cover:

- Motivation
- Human development and work-life stages
- Understanding personality
- Stress and coping

### Motivation

The motivation to behave in a particular way stems from a person's needs which can vary in intensity at different times of life. It is not the responsibility of an employer to meet all of an employee's needs. However, it is useful to understand that an employee will be working for the employer to meet some of these needs and that internal motivation drivers will vary from person to person.

Unfortunately there is no recipe for motivating staff – people are motivated by different things and something that you think is a motivator may have no effect on another person's efforts. It is important not to make assumptions about what will or will not motivate different people. Nor should you assume that what motivates you will motivate your staff. Communication with staff and understanding their internal motivations is essential.

### Theories of motivation

There are many theories about what motivates people. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is one of the most commonly referred to theories. Maslow believed that throughout their lifetime people will satisfy their needs in a specific order – from bottom up:

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



In most circumstances people's lower-level needs will need to be satisfied before higher level needs could start to have any significant motivating effect. So if people are not happy with their basic needs such as shelter and food being met, they would have little interest in personal growth and development.

Think about how your employees basic needs are met. Is the housing up to scratch? – Do they feel satisfied with this? If not, is it likely that they will not be able to see all the other positive things about the working environment? The partner of a staff member can also have a significant impact on how they feel about the job if these basic needs are not being met.

Good managers are good motivators. They create an environment where employees have a sense of pride and pleasure in their jobs. A good way of doing this is being motivated yourself – like a smile, motivation is contagious. Motivated employees will feel they have a stake in their jobs. Build up their confidence and involve them in decision-making.

The benefits of having motivated staff far outweighs the time you will need to put into get a good understanding of how to do it.

Advantages include:

- Reduced costs
- Reduced stress
- Productivity
- Raises the profile of your employment environment.



Motivation amongst your team can also have a very positive effect on retention of staff.

Refer to Template 5.1.1 for a questionnaire to identify what will motivate your employees.

A person's biological needs include the need for food, drink, clothing and shelter. It is generally accepted that as biological needs are met then a person can move into satisfying their social needs.

Social needs include such things as the need for friendship and belonging, the need for achievement and the recognition of achievement, the need for independence and the need to nurture and care for others.

We have many other social needs as well as those listed here. In relation to work performance the needs of employees that are especially important include the following:

1. **Money:** While money is not necessarily the primary driver for most employees, people do need fair remuneration
2. **To belong to the in-crowd:** This means people want to have a sense of "belonging" in the work place. It can help people to feel like they belong if they are kept up to date with what management is up to and why decisions on farm are being made
3. **The opportunity for growth and development:** This includes education and training, a career path and stimulation from outside sources
4. **Leadership:** This includes clear expectations and directions from leadership, with a picture of the desired outcomes
5. **Control of their work:** This includes things like the ability to have an influence on farm decisions, clear responsibilities and the opportunity to meet those responsibilities through planning their own work load, and recognition of achievement
6. **A balance between work and life:** Many people work their hardest when they know that there is plenty of opportunity for recreation when the work is finished.

## How to increase staff motivation

If staff are unmotivated, work through the above list and consider if the employees' needs are being met in each area.

Alternatively it may be useful to work through the process of identifying what matters most to employees, as outlined in the Retention Fact Sheet 5.1. Identifying what matters most to an employee may lead an employer to change some features of the employment relationship to more closely match the needs of the employee, in exchange for better work motivation and performance.

Employees should also take time to consider what matters most to their employer. This will help the employee meet the employer's needs in their work performance and lead to a more successful employment relationship for both parties.

Note: Just because money is the top of the list this does not mean it is the best motivational fix-it. Strong leadership that pays a fair wage but offers the employee an exciting vision for the business is an under-rated motivational tool in the sheep and beef industry.

## Human development and work-life stages

Employers usually have a need to get work within their business done and get it done properly. However the ability of a person to perform at work may be affected by their life stage. Using the following information when working through the staff planning process (see Staff Planning Fact Sheet 1.5) will help lead to better work performance results.

## Adolescence

Work becomes important to a person during adolescence. It is during this time that the work ethic is established and people start to develop a sense of “Who am I and what is my contribution to society?”

It is important during this stage that people have the opportunity to experiment and work out for themselves what they can do to best contribute to society. For this reason it is relatively uncommon for adolescents to have a strong sense of commitment to any one career – they are still experimenting with work. Generally if an employer expects commitment from a person under the age of about 20 - 23 years old they will be asking the employee to operate against the coinciding drive for experimentation. For this reason it can be better for an employer to structure a job that is filled by an adolescent in a way that ensures the job gets done properly even when the employee's mind may be elsewhere.

In modern society the period of adolescence is being stretched out further and further as people spend more time becoming educated; they are older before they become financially independent and tend to take on “adult” responsibilities such as child-rearing later in life.

This does not mean that employers should not employ adolescents. Adolescents have a lot to offer an employer. Just be aware and don't ask more of any employee than what they can reasonably give for their stage of life.

## Early adulthood

Early adulthood is about career establishment. Many people will stabilise their commitment to their work at this time, which means they may be prepared to make their job a priority in their lives.

Anecdotal evidence from the sheep and beef industry suggests that for positions where strong commitment to the job is required, best results are achieved by selecting people who have clearly entered their adult time of life. As a generalisation this means people who are aged 25 – 30 and older.

## Middle adulthood

During middle adulthood career development generally peaks and then maintains that peak. Mature employees can offer an employer a wealth of experience and life skills, including skills in things such as crisis management, time management and maintaining balance.

There is often a tendency to shift energy from career concerns to family concerns at this time of life and this is often reflected in better time management and work/life balance choices. This period usually lasts until a person reaches retirement age.

## Generation Y

There have always been differences between the age of people in the workplace but the gap that exists between younger workers and the generations before them seems greater than ever before, creating new challenges for management. This section examines the most effective strategies for managing “Generation Y” employees.

People born between 1978 and 1994 have been dubbed “Generation Y” (Gen Y) and they come into the workforce with quite different attitudes and expectations from previous generations.

Generation Y is a techno-savvy generation that has grown up with the internet in a digital, mobile world. They look for roles that offer them opportunities to acquire skills and build networks that will make them more marketable in the future. Many don't expect to stay with their first employer for more than two years.

Generation Y are idealistic, with a strong focus on family and religious values and jobs that “matter” hold great appeal.

According to Peter Sheahan, an Australian Generation Y expert, they can be defined as driven by seven mindsets:

1. **Fast:** Generation Y want immediacy and instant gratification in aspects of their lives
2. **Stimulating:** Workplaces that offer fun and challenging work are more likely to retain Generation Y
3. **Relevant:** Workplaces need to address what's in it for Generation Y (Gen Why)
4. **Connection:** Generation Y want to make a difference and to be accepted by their peers. This is a generation that makes a huge contribution to society
5. **Respect:** Fairness and honesty are important matters to Generation Y – treat them the way you want them to treat you. Traditional status hierarchies just won't cut the mustard
6. **Control:** Generation Y are lifestyle-centred and want control over their careers
7. **Modern:** Generation Y are early adopters and active users of technology. Don't avoid technology just because you don't use it, because your future Generation Y employees do.

The following tips will help you to engage, motivate and retain Generation Y employees:

#### Recruiting Generation Y

- Be candid - they don't respond well to a hard sell
- Ensure there is a cultural fit by matching individual values to the businesses
- Use the internet as an advertising means
- Manage the candidate relationship effectively, responding promptly, making each candidate feel unique and keeping them informed.

#### Managing Generation Y

- Build effective relationships that acknowledge people professionally and as individuals (people are reluctant to leave if they have friends)
- Provide frequent feedback
- Instantly recognise and reward outstanding efforts
- Adopt a collaborative management style
- Work-life balance is essential (younger employees want control of their time)
- Encourage and support personal growth and development plans
- Let people know how their work contributes to organisational goals so that work feels meaningful
- Train well at the beginning so that you get an early return on your investments – you may not have them long-term.

Salary and benefits are important to employees of any generation, but finding challenging work in a nurturing environment is more important to Generation Y.

## How to use life-stage information

Consider where employees are in terms of their life stage. What are they looking for at the moment? Discuss it with employees and consider if the job available meets what the employee is currently looking for in life and in a job. If there is a mismatch, are there ways to change the way the workload is being managed on the farm to match both the employer's and the employee's needs more closely? For example, a person in a managerial role may be prepared to take less money in exchange for more part-time help on the farm and more time off.

## Understanding personality

There are many different tools available for understanding personality. This fact sheet discusses the DISC model, but other equally useful personality tools can be found through books and the Internet.

The most important thing to remember when using these tools is that no person fits completely into one box. Personality typing is a guide only and each “box” represents an extreme of a personality type. In reality all people have a combination of all the types in their personality. People usually tend more towards one of the personality types than the other types, however they will move towards other personality types under different conditions, for example when stressed.

Many people who use personality-typing information find that the most useful information they gain is self-understanding. When people understand themselves they can then see more clearly why another person may choose to behave differently.

Understanding interactions between the different personalities is an important part of personality typing. Usually strong differences between people creates discomfort and friction in a working environment. Employers and employees who make an effort to understand personality differences will be able to work with people who are different from themselves with greater understanding and appreciation for the differences.

Employers may also like to use this information to select staff to either take advantage of personality differences and fill gaps in their own work style, or to select staff to get complementary personality styles. From here all people still need to be managed effectively to get the best results for the team.

All personalities can add value to a farming business. There is no type that is most suited to sheep and beef farming.

### I = Influencer

- Outgoing/friendly/sociable
- Leads by enthusing
- Global approach
- Promotes change
- Impulsive
- Operates from gut feel
- Avoids data
- Seeks attention

Motivated by: Change, acknowledgment, new ideas

### S = Stabiliser

- Reserved
- Good team member – loyal
- Patient
- Undemanding
- Accommodating of others
- Maintains status quo
- Submissive
- Avoids conflict

Motivated by: Security, acceptance, teamwork

### D = Direct

- Outgoing
- Assertive
- Challenges the status quo
- Focused on results
- Likes to take the lead
- Takes action to bring about change
- Operates from fact
- Resists authority
- Aggressive

Motivated by: Results, recognition, challenge

### C = Conscientious

- Reserved
- Systematic
- Attentive to detail
- Sets high standards
- Focuses on the task at hand
- Sticks to guidelines
- Likes to plan for change
- Desires control but passive in approach
- Revengeful

Motivated by: High standards, appreciation, quality

## Hints on communicating with DISC styles

Communication in the workplace can be improved by understanding personality styles. A flexible approach must be taken depending on the other person's style.

### Direct personalities

Direct personalities speak in shorter sentences and come straight to the point. They think and respond quickly and have an impatient style. Don't bother with small talk, but still be nice, or tell them long stories, but keep communication direct and to the point.

### Influencing personalities

Influencing personalities are bubbly, friendly, informal and use creative language. To communicate effectively with influencers be positive and enthusiastic as well as emphasising the value of the person.

### Stabilising personalities

Stabilising personalities are generally quietly spoken but are friendly and approachable. They need space to speak and should not be interrupted. Use phrases such as "How do you feel about it?", "I'd be grateful if..." and avoid harsh orders with stabilising personalities.

### Conscientious personalities

Conscientious personalities speak thoughtfully and precisely with pauses for thinking. Do not interrupt conscientious personalities. Use words like "It's logical, reasonable, clear..." and avoid creative and colourful talk.

Source: Target 10 website – [www.nre.vic.gov.au](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au)

## Stress and coping

Stress can be both positive and negative. Stress is a part of everyday life and can be part of what makes life stimulating and interesting, but excessive stress can be destructive.

We all experience stress differently. Some people thrive on stress while others shy away from it as much as possible. Events that are stressful for one person can be routine for another.

Responses to excessive stress include:

- Taking it out on other people (yelling, losing temper, aggression etc)
- Giving up
- Self-indulgence (e.g. with food, alcohol etc)
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Poor judgement
- Headaches, indigestion, high blood pressure.

Excessive stress can lead to impaired work performance, burnout, and health problems. Under the Health and Safety in Employment Act employers have a duty to manage stress to avoid such problems, which in effect means monitoring individual responses to stress.

Almost all people experience times when they feel excessively stressed, and there can be a fine line between coping and not coping with stress. It is recommended that employers and employees seek professional advice when they are experiencing problems in coping with stress as early as possible.

Employers are required to take all practicable steps to eliminate, isolate, or minimise the “physical and mental harm caused by work related stress and physical or mental fatigue”.

The following features in a work environment will help minimise stress in the workplace:

- Clear expectations of what is expected from employees in their work
- Boundaries around responsibility areas – this ensures that people know where their responsibilities start and where they stop
- Consistency from management in how staff are treated
- A culture of support for all people on the farm
- Regular and scheduled time off
- Regular breaks during the day.

The level of social support that a person has from friends or family can also help them manage stress. More support means better stress management.

### Managing Relationships

Another way to minimize stress is by managing relationships. Managing relationships and positively addressing the conflict within them allows employees and employers to recognize each other's perceptions, values, emotions and disorders which can lead to opportunities for change.

Examples of positive conflict management:

- Separating the people from the problem- this allows our perceptions or mental models to be removed from the issue and the focus to concentrate on the problem alone.
- Seek object criteria- using a neutral third party can provide more clarity to a situation
- Exploring our own underlying interests and self-reflection. More awareness surrounding why we do what we do on a subjective level, can create more informed decisions based on what is best for the situation rather than what one may personally believe is the right step.

## Useful references

**How to Speed-Read People**, Des Morris

**Stress and Fatigue**, Federated Farmers Fact Sheet

## Useful websites

[www.personality-insights.com](http://www.personality-insights.com)

[www.careerdisc.com](http://www.careerdisc.com)

[www.discprofile.com](http://www.discprofile.com)

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