



Topic	Topic
Socio-Economic Resilience 	Society friendly 

Background

Dairy farms are typically family ventures where parents, children, siblings and others (including employed staff) need to work together in a coherent and cohesive manner. This can include the day to day running of the farm (daily tasks) to the longer-term strategic future of the farm which includes topics such as setting values, investments and significant changes to the business.

How do you ensure the family and staff work together on a farm

- Ensure that there is an agreement on the **overall goals and objectives** to the farm. This should align as much as possible with the personal goals of the family members
- It is often helpful to have a third party to **facilitate** these discussions. There are a number of consultants who specialise in this area.
- Good **succession planning** is also important in avoiding friction between family members.
- **Regular meetings** of family and / or staff are vital. This should be done on a weekly basis - ideally at the start of the week.
 - Current performance of the dairy herd and any pressing issues can be discussed.
 - Tasks for the week ahead should be agreed and person(s) identified to complete the tasks. Ideally this should be written up on a whiteboard for future reference.
- **Standard operating procedures** should be agreed so all tasks are undertaken in a consistent manner and not duplicated. For example, agree a procedure for dealing with newborn calves (e.g. feeding colostrum, spraying the navel and applying an ear tag). That way if someone sees a newborn calf with an ear tag in it they will know that it has already been fed colostrum and had its navel sprayed.
- There should be **monthly or quarterly meetings** which take a longer term look at the farm and measure performance against longer term objectives.

Important Points

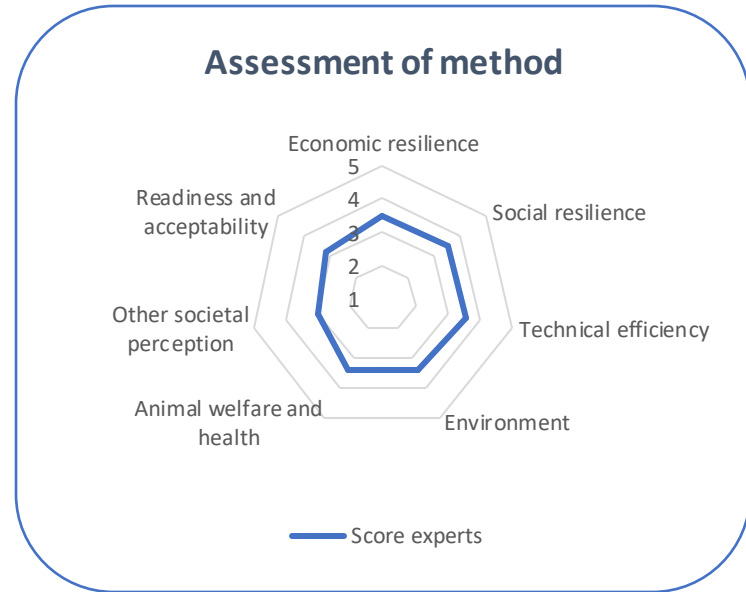
- If the core values of the farm are not reaffirmed and strengthened with each generation, the odds of family farm conflict increase.
- During meetings it is important that everyone gets a chance to speak.

Elements of a good farm business plan

- All family partners should be aware of the plan and buy into it.
- The goals should be clear.
- Family members or partners should be assigned to various tasks or activities.
- The roles of family members should be regularly reviewed to match the business goals and skills requirements.
- Regular reviews.
- Annual leave plans including holiday requirements of family members.
- The personal time allocation within the short term business plan.
- Inputs for planned farming activities should always be costed, planned and timed.

Equipment involved? Investment?

- The only real investment that is needed is perhaps the use of an independent **facilitator** or other experts when agreeing overall aims and objectives,
- The occasional (annual) use of **consultants, accountants** etc to assess overall performance can also be helpful.
- A large **whiteboard** in a communal area where current tasks and a rota can be listed is helpful. Ideally this should be mounted alongside a clearly labelled map of the farm.
- A **WhatsApp group** can also be helpful in day-to-day communications.



Quote of the farmer:
“Regular communication and shared values between family members and staff are essential”