



Resilience for Dairy (R4D) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000770



Resilience4Dairy: Sharing knowledge to improve sustainability and resilience of the dairy sector



LYON 30/8/2023



Valerie Brocard, Idele, France

Marija Klopčič, University Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jeff Boonen, LTA, Luxemburg



Univerza v Ljubljani



Lycée Technique Agricole

82% of people in the Dairy sector indicate that **work-life balance** is an important factor for **dairy farmers** to be **resilient**

(R4D project)



Labour: a key factor in the resilience of the European dairy farmer

EAAP 2023 – Lyon

Speaker: Sandra Debevere (Inagro)

sandra.debevere@inagro.be

Labour challenges in the dairy sector



4 for
Dairy




Times have changed... also in the dairy sector

- Farms' sizes increase, activities are diversifying (incl. administration)
⇒ **workload rises**
- Own workforces decrease ⇒ **workforces become limiting factor**
- Employees: other vision on **working time** and workload
⇒ **employees and farmers feel disconnected**
- Farmers' aspirations
⇒ **Competitiveness and control of the workload** (physical and mental)
⇒ **quality of life at work, free time, health**
- Societal expectations are changing ⇒ **challenging!**

farmers aspirations



Society expectation




Indicators labour time*

Indicators	1 st decile	Mean	9 th decile
	26	45	66
Labour time/MC/year	14	22	33
Milking time/MC/year (without robot)	2,5	5	7,5
Labour time /1000 litre	28	48	71
MC/FTE	244 000	444 000	697000



Mean labour time farmer: $45 \times 48 = 2\,160$ h / FTE / year
 Including all other tasks: 3 000 h / FTE / year
 Employee: 1 800 h / FTE / year

Explanatory factors for the differences

- **1-The people**: goals / work, organisational capacity, profiles (perfectionist, ...) and practice
- **2-Size of the herd**: « scale-up »
- **3-The equipment**: milking process (Herringbone, robot, carousel), feeding (feed mixer, automated calf feeders,...), cleaning and bedding,... & ergonomics and equipment of the buildings, walking lines (people, animals, feed...)
- **4-The system**: grazing site... and **farm organization**: farm site itself, number of farm sites,...

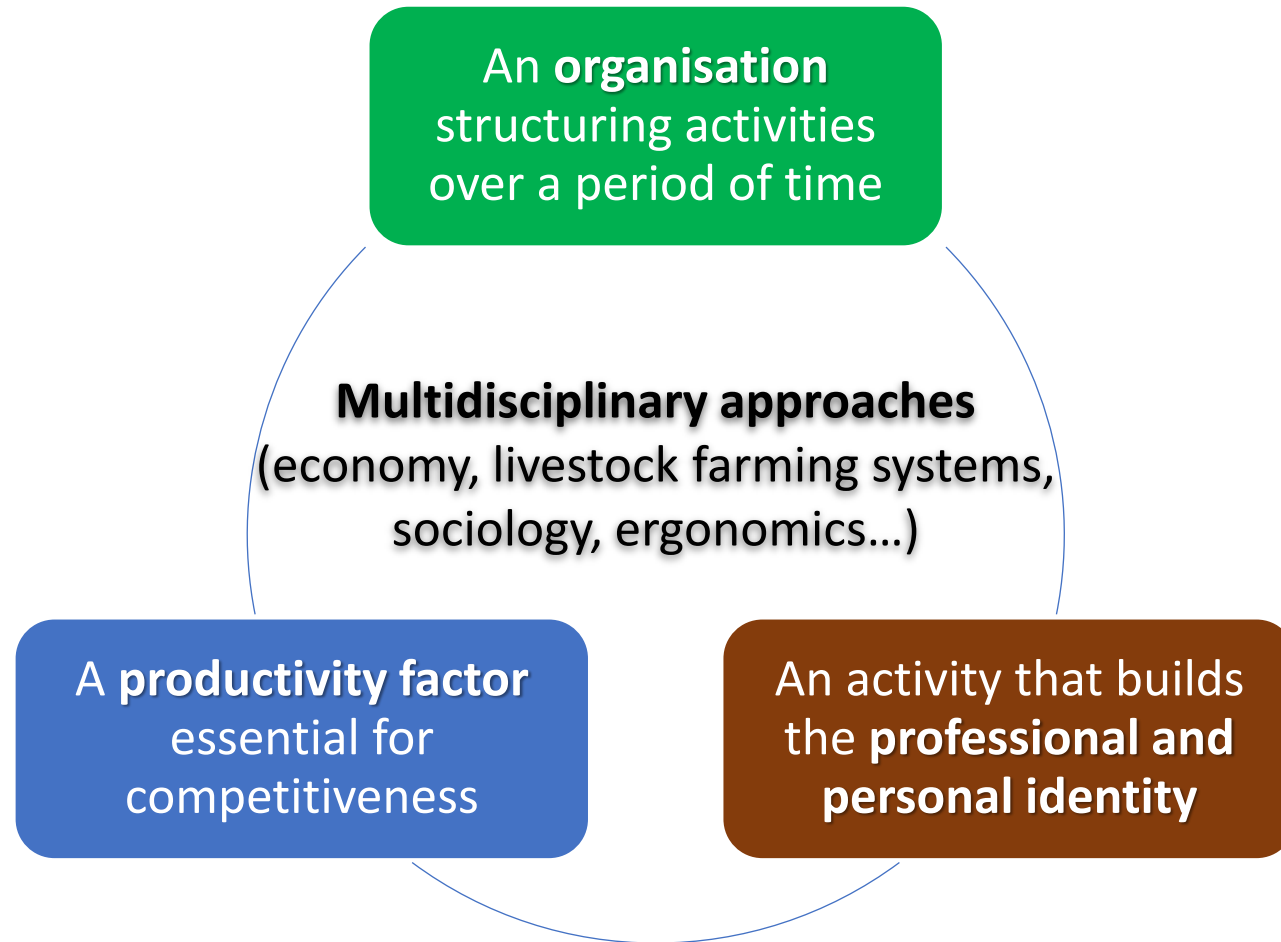
Analysis of labour on the dairy farm



4 for
Dairy



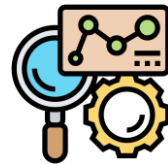
3 main dimensions are work-related



For every farmers,
labour is a **balance among**
all these 3 dimensions.

How to follow farmers? Which tools are available?

Raise awareness → Diagnostic → Study solutions → Implement, action plan



Several levers for dairy farmers



Simplify your practices

Delegate or Change
workforce composition

Equipment or building
Investment

- 1 or more solutions
- Different approaches/goals:
 - Strategic
 - Efficiency
 - ...

Practical solutions for dairy farms



Simplify your practices

Reduce number of milkings (only 1 on Sunday)

Block calving

Forage purchase

Work with calendars: year – month – week – day

Day planning: only plan 80% of your day!

Whiteboard to plan tasks:

- To do – in progress – done
- Each person a specific color
- Other things to communicate (things to order, defects,...)

Walking lines

Protocols (e.g. infographics)

Internal communication on the farm:

- Shared digital agenda
- Shared WhatsApp

Lean management

...



Example



Source: CowCoach

Delegate or change workforce composition

Shared employee

Share equipment (with neighbour, relative,...) or participate in a cooperation

Delegate activities:

- land work: contractor
- administrative tasks
- claw trimming: by an external person on regular basis

Heifers reared away

...



Example



Equipment or building investment

Milking parlour / Milking Robot

Automatic Feed Station

Total Mix ration wagon feeder

Building organisation

High water-pressure cleaning systems

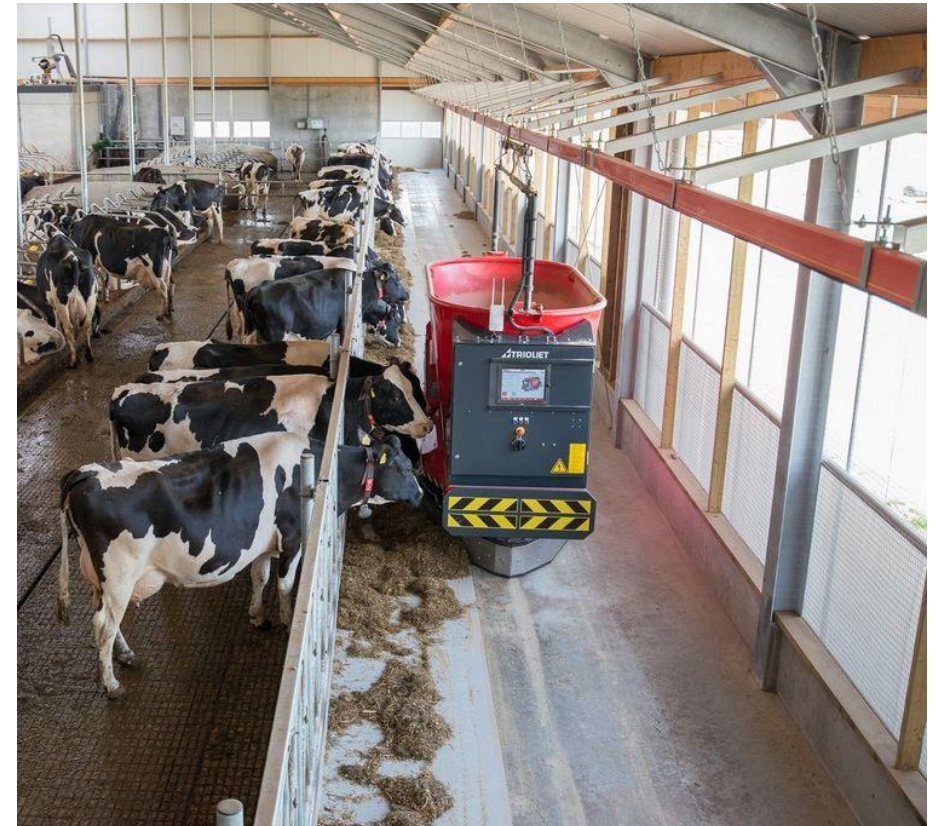
Precision livestock farming: sensors, automata, data analysis...

Computer and software

...



Example



82% of people in the Dairy sector indicate that **work-life balance** is an important factor for **dairy farmers** to be **resilient**

(R4D project)



Appendix: labour solutions R4D

- Factsheets about labour:
 - Outsourcing of general contract work
 - Human resources management (incl. staff management) incentive systems and financing benefits to retain employees, linked to production results
 - Application of the LEAN method to work more efficient (including SOPs and organizing the farm system more simple)
 - Human resources management / people management (incl. staff management)
 - Assess and improve labour organisation on the farm by a tool (Declic Travail tool or Work Assessment Method)
 - Working together in a farm (from settling to day to day management, sharing values)
 - Increased use of contractors for fodder production
 - Cooperation between similar farmers allows for the use of buildings, equipment, labour to optimize farm efficiency
 - Working hours monitoring
 - Attract workforce/employee cooperation
 - Labour organisation solutions: investment in machinery
 - ...
- Online training sessions about lean management





Resilience for Dairy (R4D) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000770



Univerza v Ljubljani



Employees: a challenging solution*

- Recruiting new staff often seen as solution for labour problems
- However:
 - Difficult to find a suitable employee (incl. bad experiences)
 - High cost
 - High expectations in the search for the “ideal employee”



What complicates recruitment

- Difficulty delegating (and accepting that work is done in a different way)
- Time for training and support/ the return on investment of time spent
- Problem of staff retention/ attractiveness of the job



What makes recruitment easier

- Motivation of the candidate
- Respect for material and people
- Passion for animals

Motivation & obstacles to work on a dairy farm

An attractive job due to nature and contact with animals...

... but also bottlenecks that put candidates off



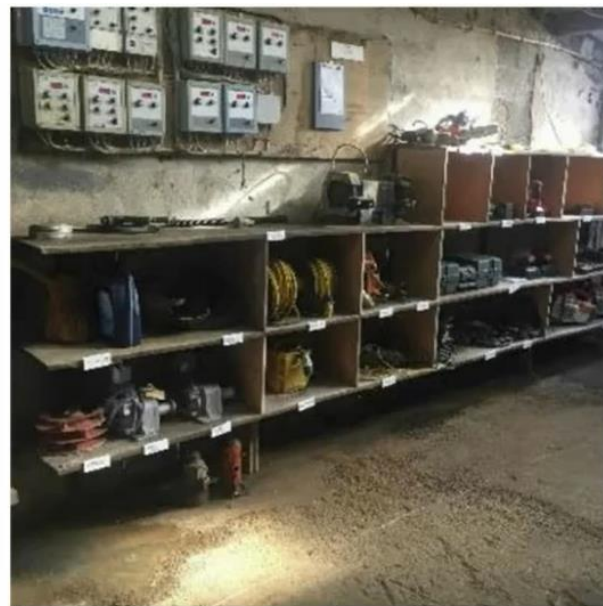
Simplify your practices



Example 2 lean management:

Well-equipped working place

Introduce the 5 S method



Source: EU PiG network (2020)

“Time to search but no time to organize?”

