



IT'S THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS

It's about believing in what you are doing. There is no one single thing that delivers the Finches' health and safety successes. It's the combination of everything they do that contributes to the positive, safe and healthy farm culture.



HAVING A MINDSET OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IS THE KEY.

IT'S A TEAM APPROACH

Health and safety, and hazard identification are standing items on the agenda of the regular meetings the couple hold with their staff around the kitchen table with tea and cake.

Everyone is involved in the decision-making process, and staff are encouraged to come up with ideas on the best way forward. As farm assistant Becca says, "Hayden and Rachael take opinions from each of us to come up with the best solution... to go forward with next. We're all very involved with what happens here."



WHY HEALTH AND SAFETY IS IMPORTANT

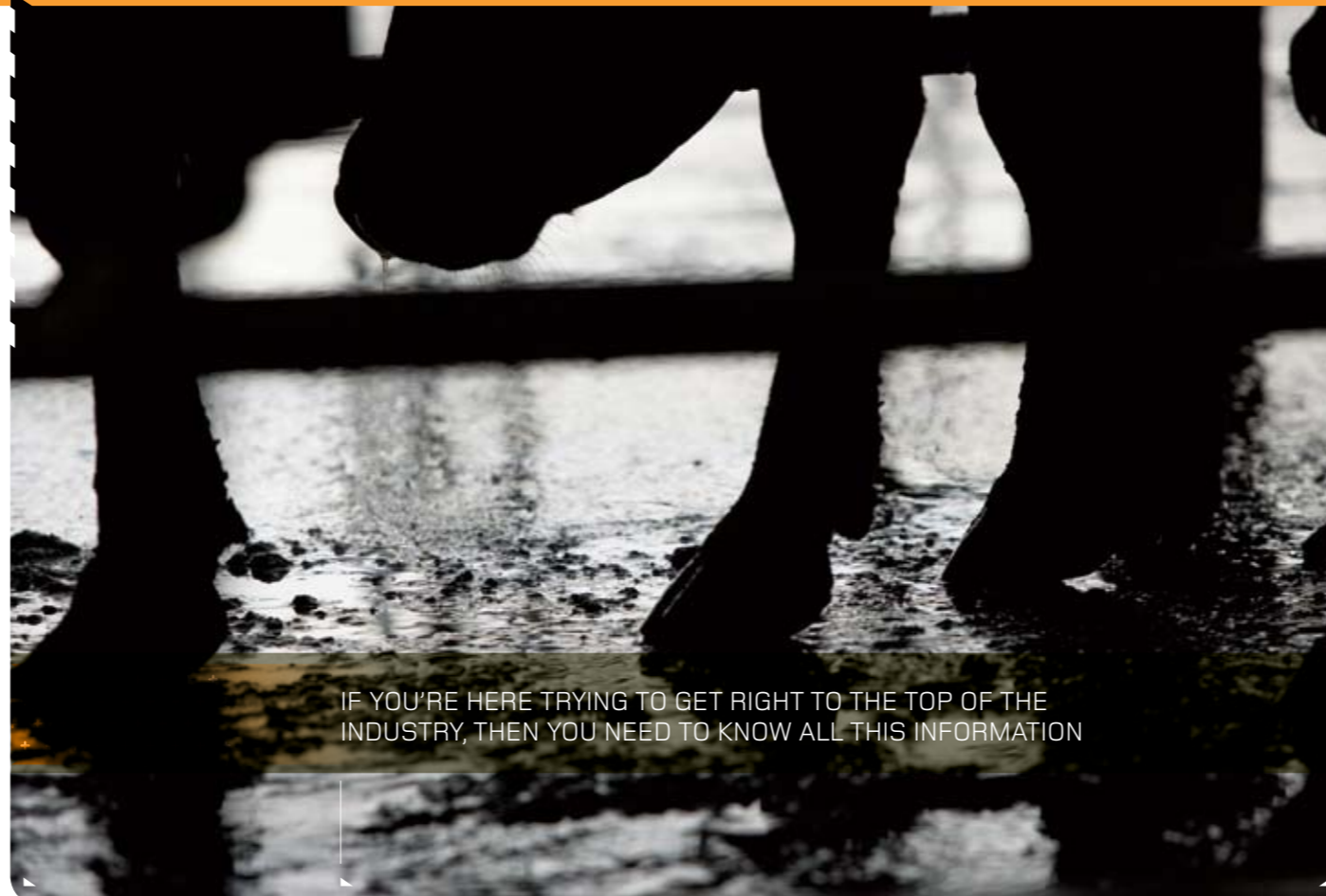
Both Hayden and Rachael grew up on farms, so have always been aware of the hazards involved in farming. "With the changing nature of farming, you've got new equipment coming onto the farm and into the business all the time... You have to work out whether it's dangerous or not, and how it can be made safe for your staff," says Hayden.

Their awareness of health and safety grew while they were both working in the gold mining industry in Western Australia. A series of major incidents, including a fatality, heightened their understanding of the importance of having good health and safety systems in place.

The Finches are interested in health and safety in its own right. It is vital to them that their children, their staff and they themselves are safe, but they also appreciate how health and safety connects to their business targets. The couple see their business as a 'system', with all parts of the operation impacting on each other.

As Rachael says, "There's going to be a lot of downtime if we're down a staff member because of injury, and the job just won't get done."

They understand that staff who work efficiently are going to improve the productivity of their farm. And in a high-risk industry like farming, working efficiently means working safely. They want good health and safety systems in place so they can be confident that things are being done in the safest and most efficient way. "It's good for us in that we can have confidence that things are going to be going right out on the farm," says Hayden.



IF YOU'RE HERE TRYING TO GET RIGHT TO THE TOP OF THE INDUSTRY, THEN YOU NEED TO KNOW ALL THIS INFORMATION

IT'S ABOUT INVESTING IN YOUR STAFF

This staff investment starts on the first day with a full induction programme and training. Staff are introduced to the various hazards as they go onto each new task, and a buddy system helps them gain confidence. Staff are also encouraged to do training, such as first aid or chainsaw courses. For herd manager Brad, training courses are really important: "If you're here trying to get right to the top of the industry, then you need to know all this information."

EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT FARMING BEING SUSTAINABLE, AND THAT'S THE SAME WITH OUR STAFF. WE CAN'T JUST KEEP CHEWING THROUGH PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN INJURED ON THE JOB

By making their working hours more comparable to a 'town' job, with a 'six and two' roster (six days on/two days off), the Finches have found their roster attracts staff and helps them stay alert. They also noticed a huge improvement in staff productivity after they began sharing the evening meal with them. Instead of a bag of chips for dinner, resulting in lethargic and tired workers, by providing a decent meal, they found their staff were a lot more active and engaged.



IT BRINGS HOME HOW SIMPLE ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN AND THAT A SIMPLE ACCIDENT CAN BE A TRAGEDY.

THE EMPHASIS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THIS FARM HAS CONFIRMED FOR ME THAT THIS IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR FARMING

IT'S ABOUT HAVING CLEAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

"There are a lot of things we do in day-to-day work that have the potential to cause harm," says Rachael. The couple have developed a practical set of manuals clearly setting out their responsibilities and those of their staff.

The hazard manual is a living document that is constantly reviewed as new machinery and chemicals come onto the farm. It sets out all the identified hazards and explains how they can be managed, for example, machinery, terrain, animals, vehicles and chemicals. Farm assistant Helen says, "The emphasis on health and safety on this farm has confirmed for me that this is the way forward for farming."

Hayden and Rachael get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from supporting the dairy farming industry through their staff taking their health and safety experience and skills as their careers progress.

IT'S ABOUT HAVING A POSITIVE, SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE CULTURE

The Finches run their farm with their hearts and heads. The result is a positive, safe and healthy culture. They have witnessed the personal tragedies caused by poor health and safety, and because their farm is the family home as well as their business, health and safety is imperative.

They are also aware of the business benefits from valuing staff and having good health and safety systems in place. Attracting quality staff who can work efficiently, confidently and safely is a direct and clear contributor to farm productivity, which takes them one step closer to their plan of owning their own farm.



"THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS WE DO IN DAY-TO-DAY WORK THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE HARM"

HEALTHY PEOPLE IN SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACES

CASE STUDY



HEALTH AND SAFETY

MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

FACT FILE

COMPANY	Finch Farm
STAFF	5
LOCATION	Rakaia, Canterbury
BUSINESS	Dairy Farming

FINCH FARM

Many industries are taking on a more holistic approach to health and safety in the workplace and seeing the benefits in increased productivity, greater staff loyalty and reduced injury rates.

Farming has long been recognised as a hazard-rich occupation where a sound approach to health and safety can make a real difference to productivity and employee satisfaction.

Hayden and Rachael Finch are 50/50 sharemilkers on a 191-hectare dairy farm near Rakaia in Canterbury, milking 725 cows through a 40-bail rotary shed. They have been on the property since 2004 and have signed up for another three seasons, with a plan to buy their own farm after that. They live on the farm with their two young children and employ three full-time staff.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Health and safety is part of every aspect of a business. Seeing your business as a system helps to integrate health and safety effectively and productively.
- Staff who feel safe, valued and equipped with the right skills have the confidence and capability to be effective, efficient and productive.
- Building a positive safety culture needs to involve everyone in the business.
- Identifying hazards and managing them needs to be an ongoing process.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

INVESTMENT	RETURN
Staff induction and training	Confident, skilled staff who can do the job properly the first time.
Practical manuals and policies	Everyone is clear on their responsibilities and how to approach the various tasks on the farm. This makes for a more efficient way of working.
'Six and two' roster with timesheets	Less fatigued staff. Improved staff recruitment and retention.
An open and inclusive workplace	Free exchange of ideas and knowledge. Good farm culture.
Sharing meals with staff	More alert and productive staff.

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