

DAIRYNZ Position Description

Senior Scientist

Position

Position Title: Senior Scientist

Direct Report: None

Budget: <\$100k for budgeted project OPEX.

Management Position: No

Reports to: Senior Science Manager

Career Level: Advanced Specialist

Revenue: None

Delegated Authority: <\$100,000 Project budget

Purpose of DairyNZ

Our Purpose: ***Progressing a positive future for New Zealand dairy farming.***

That's why we exist for farmers, working alongside them and others to leverage our collective strength and create purposeful change.

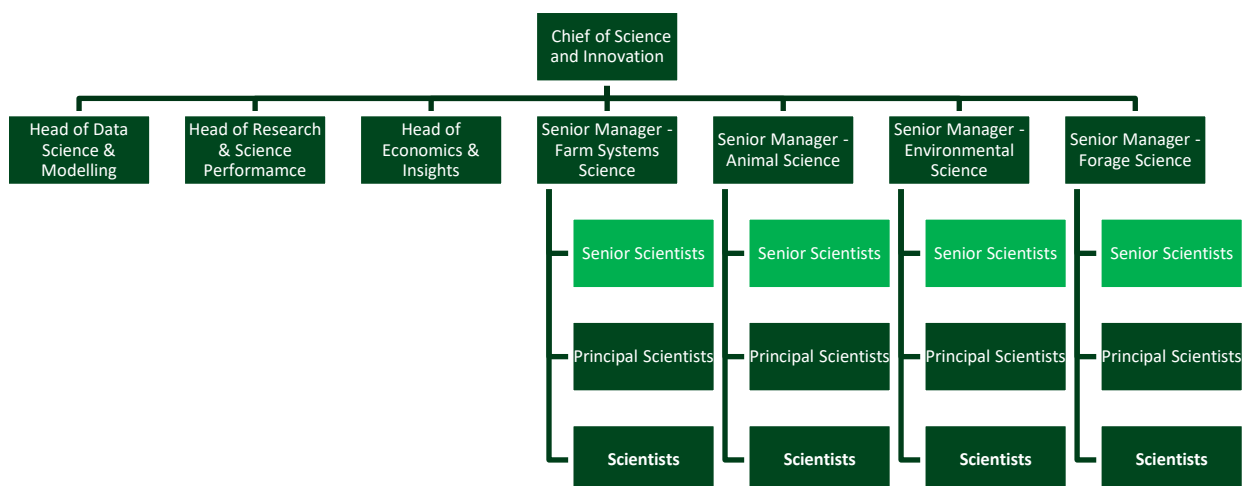
Purpose of the position

To contribute to the increased sustainability, profitability, and productivity of New Zealand dairy farms through the design, delivery and leadership of research and development programmes.

Operating within a dynamic, levy-funded model, the role works within a matrix framework with other teams and business units across the organisation. This role leads significant, and often multiple, research initiatives across portfolios, programmes and projects, balancing strategic leadership with hands-on delivery, to develop practical outcomes for farmers.

The Senior Scientist integrates science, farm systems knowledge and stakeholder insights to shape and deliver science that is relevant to the future of the dairy sector and ensuring outcomes translate into meaningful on-farm impact and benefit of New Zealand dairy farmers and the sector needs.

Team organisation chart



Key position deliverables

Key deliverables of the role to be reflected in the Performance Agreement and Individual Performance Targets.

Key Performance Requirement:	Key Indicators:
Research	• Deep understanding of research methodologies and technical expertise within a specialised discipline. • Lead and deliver significant research projects and programmes aligned to DairyNZ strategy, including managing collaborators, partners and subcontractors, ensuring delivery is grounded in real-world farm systems and practical implementation. • Contribute to the science strategy by identifying and developing research ideas that are important to dairy farmers and the sector and aligned to DairyNZ strategy. • Provide scientifically robust expert advice to the dairy sector in your area of expertise. • Apply systems thinking to facilitate connection across disciplines and translate insights into whole farm system outcomes. • Use current best practice research methods to conduct research focused on the New Zealand dairy sector. • Collate data and analyse results using appropriate data management and statistical techniques (qualitative and quantitative).

	• Translate scientific findings into practical outputs including tools, guidelines, standards and best practice principles that support farmer adoption, not just scientific publications. • Contribute to the development of sector knowledge and guidance, supporting best practice for New Zealand dairy farming. • Maintain a strong focus on farmer impact, ensuring research outcomes are timely, relevant, accessible and support measurable change on farm. • Contribute to the stewardship and effective use of national-scale dairy datasets to generate insight and support decision making. • Author and contribute to relevant project reports, management papers, science publications (including peer reviewed scientific publications) and sector articles, often involving external collaborators. • Maintain scientific excellence through ongoing learning, reading, writing, networking, synthesis and reflection. • Build capability in new tools and methodologies (e.g. R, data platforms, emerging technologies) to enhance research effectiveness. • Comply with DairyNZ Animal Ethics Policy, Animal Welfare Act, Human research ethics, Privacy Act 2020, ethical guidelines for research and all legislative and DairyNZ requirements for operations of trials and experiments.
Research Project Management	• Take accountability for designing, planning, resourcing, budgeting, reporting and delivery of significant research projects and programmes within agreed scope. • Manage risks, issues, dependencies and trade-offs across multiple projects, balancing scientific ambition with delivery constraints. • Delegate effectively and coach others in research delivery.
Co-development, Extension and Sector Impact	• Demonstrate a high level of understanding of farmer and stakeholder needs. • Actively engage with farmers and the sector, including time outside formal research projects, recognising that direct engagement underpins credibility, relevance and impact, to ensure research remains grounded and relevant. • Involve farmers and other stakeholders in co-design of research and delivery (including extension). • Integrate research and extension to ensure findings are effectively translated and adopted in practice, such as: ○ Attending, presenting, and contributing to conferences, farmer events and field days ○ Authoring articles for dairy sector press, DairyNZ website, Inside Dairy and other dairy industry initiatives

	○ Implementing partner farm networks, communities of practice, communities of interest ● Is a confident communicator with a range of stakeholders. Is an invited speaker at national and international forums (lectures, conferences).
Leadership and Contribution	● Be approachable, inspire and motivate others. Provide leadership across project teams, influence with and without direct authority to achieve outcomes. ● Lead teams and support capability development, including supervising or mentoring students (MSc / PhD) and scientists. ● Coach and mentor other scientists, supporting capability development and high performance. ● Contribute to building a collaborative, innovative and future-focused science culture. ● Liaise with senior science managers to manage workflow and workload within and between projects. ● The Senior Scientist role represents a transition from delivery-focused science to broader leadership, influence and shaping of applied research, while remaining strongly connected to on-farm impact. ● Maintains networks across the sector and the national and international science system (including, e.g., universities, research organisations, government, iwi, and industry). Seeks collaboration opportunities to increase impact. Is involved in external strategies and initiatives.
How We Work	● Support DairyNZ values and principles: Courage, Credibility, Connected and Curiosity. ● Understand and adhere to company policies and guidelines. ● Actively support and contribute to DairyNZ organisational culture of one team. ● Actively support and encourage continuous improvement to drive our organisation forward. ● Strive to provide a safe and healthy workplace. ● Role model industry safe working practices. ● Actively promote DairyNZ Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policies and procedures. ● Support and encourage employee participation and consultation in all aspects of Health, Safety and Wellbeing management. ● Comply with legislative requirements and relevant standards.

Key relationships

Internal	External
Science team	Dairy farmers
Research & Science teams	External consultants and rural professionals
Project leads	National and International Research providers (PROs, private agencies)
Solutions and Development, Regional teams and Farmer Communications	Subcontractors and contractors
Other DairyNZ teams and business units (Policy, Project Portfolio Office, Legal and Risk)	University academics and students
	Regional and national government

Qualifications and experience

Essential	Preferred
PhD in relevant field or equivalent experience	Experience working within applied, industry-focused or levy-funded research environments
Proven ability to undertake specialised scientific research	Experience contributing to industry guidance, extension, knowledge transfer or farmer change activities
Excellent written, oral and interpersonal communication skills, with proven ability to write manuscripts for peer-reviewed scientific journals and communicate complex scientific concepts to a range of audiences, including farmers and industry stakeholders	Dairy farm systems knowledge; understanding of the fundamentals of pasture-based dairy systems
Self-motivation, drive and initiative	Experience with statistical packages (i.e. R) as well as qualitative research software (i.e. Nvivo or Atlas.ti)
Strong understanding of the New Zealand dairy sector and the context NZ dairy farmers operate in	Ability to demonstrate/Demonstrates strategic planning skills
Experience applying a range of research methodologies to complex, real-world problems	Experience working with or contributing to the use of large or complex datasets
Demonstrated ability to lead and deliver significant research projects or programmes, including accountability for budgets, reporting and delivery in applied research environments	

Experience in managing competing priorities, timelines and stakeholders across multiple projects	
Proven ability to translate scientific findings into practical, applied outcomes (e.g. tools, guidelines, or best practice for end users)	
Experience working within or contributing to multi-disciplinary research programmes	
Strong systems thinking capability, with the ability to connect science across disciplines to farm system outcomes	
Experience contributing to research funding proposals and working with external partners or collaborators	
Demonstrated ability to influence and collaborate across a matrix environment	

Career level competencies – Advanced Specialist

Competency	Descriptor/Evidence
STRATEGIC AGILITY	Sees ahead clearly; can anticipate future consequences and trends accurately; has broad knowledge and perspective; is future oriented; can articulately paint credible pictures and visions of possibilities and likelihoods; can create competitive and breakthrough strategies and plans.
INNOVATION MANAGEMENT	Is good at bringing the creative ideas of others to fruition; has good judgement about which creative ideas and suggestions will work; has a sense about managing the creative process of others; can facilitate effective brainstorming; can project how potential ideas may play out in practice.
NEGOTIATING	Can negotiate skilfully in tough situations with both internal and external groups; can settle differences with minimum noise; can win concessions without damaging relationships; can be both direct and forceful as well as diplomatic; gains trust quickly of other parties to the negotiations; has a good sense of timing.
ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY	Knowledgeable about how organisations work; knows how to get things done both through formal channels and the informal network; understands the origin and reasoning behind key policies, practices, and procedures; understands the cultures of organisations.