Are you recruiting migrant workers?
What do you need to know?
Tips and Information
- Key tips and information in each section of this booklet are highlighted using the symbols below.
Contents

How will this guide help you? 2
Preparing for your migrant worker 4
Employing migrant workers – is it right for you? 4
What do you need to get ready for migrant workers? 6
Have you got their accommodation sorted? 7
Three areas of change for migrant workers 9

Settling in your migrant worker

What to do when new migrants arrive 11
Welcome kit 13
Orientation 14

The New Zealand workplace

A word about New Zealand employment law 18

A safe workplace 23
Everyone works in the same way don’t they? Yeah right! 25

Language and communication 30
Does it take a while to get your message across? 30

CARDS
CARD 1-2 Your checklist to plan ahead
CARD 3-4 More than words
CARD 5-6 Support for employers of migrant dairy workers

Being well prepared for the arrival of new migrant workers can make a big difference to how well they settle into work, their productivity and their enjoyment of life in New Zealand. A happy, well-settled migrant equals a happy and productive employee who is more likely to remain loyal. You can help by providing the migrant (and their family) with information and insight into the basics like introductions to schools and even employment opportunities for their partner.

Before arrival

- Have I got some information to give my employee on living and working in New Zealand such as Living and working on a New Zealand dairy farm: A guide for migrant dairy farm workers available at: http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz

Your checklist
to plan ahead

Your checklist to plan ahead

Your checklist to plan ahead
How will this guide help you?

Migrant workers are increasingly important to the New Zealand dairy sector because they are able to fill labour and skill shortages. Employing migrants can be quite different from employing New Zealanders and new migrant workers may need quite a lot of help from you, particularly when they first start.

It can take time for new migrants to adjust to living and working in New Zealand. It is important that you, their employer, have access to information and support to help integrate them into your farm and the local community, even if they are here on a temporary visa.
This guide contains practical tips and tools to help you better understand and support your migrant workers. It can be used by farm owners, farm managers, sharemilkers, and co-workers of migrant workers.

*Find out how to:*

 › plan ahead and prepare for migrant workers
 › save costs by retaining your migrant workers longer
 › have happier, more productive employees
 › have fewer staffing headaches
 › add value to your bottom line.

**TIP — For queries about organising migrant visas or any compliance issues relating to employing migrant workers contact:**

![Immigration New Zealand on 0508 55 88 55, or www.immigration.govt.nz/employers](image-url)
Preparing for your migrant worker

Employing migrant workers – is it right for you?

*Migrant workers can be a great asset to your farm... here are some facts to consider:*

 › Most migrant dairy workers are only here on a temporary visa.

 › All migrant employees are covered by New Zealand employment law.

 › Migrants might be used to different employer-worker relationships than we have in New Zealand, so your style of managing them might need to differ from that used for a New Zealand employee.

*You might think that migrant workers sound like hard work.*

*But they’re not really – in fact they work hard and they’re very keen to learn how we do things here.*
 › Migrants may have limited experience of working on New Zealand dairy farms and might need a bit of extra training.

 › English might not be their first language, making it a bit more challenging to teach them the ropes.

 › Migrants come from different cultures and often value different things from Kiwis.

**Employing migrant workers is easier if you think ahead:**

 › Employ migrant workers before your work-load peaks so they have time to settle in.

 › Provide them with some information about living and working on your farm and about the local area and community.

 › Prepare to give them training about working on your dairy farm.

 › Be aware that migrants usually arrive here with only a suitcase, so providing fully-equipped accommodation is really helpful.

 › Advise them about the need for lots of warm clothing in New Zealand.

 › Be aware that they may want to bring their family to live with them on your farm.

For further tips on planning ahead refer to the reference cards at the back of this guide
What do you need to get ready for migrant workers?

› accommodation
› an orientation programme
› a welcome kit
› an employment agreement (your worker will need a copy)
› your existing staff – put them in the picture.

Much of this preparation will only need to be done once. Next time you employ a migrant your accommodation and orientation programme will be ready.

TIPS

Tips from Kim Solly and Jeremy Casey, Canterbury sharemilkers and experienced employers of migrant staff

*It makes a difference if you:*

› are patient and can appreciate other ways of doing things
› are open-minded and interested in other cultures
› can put yourself in the migrant’s shoes
› have a sense of humour.
Have you got their accommodation sorted?

Kiwi workers usually bring their own furniture. It’s pretty certain this won’t be the case for a new migrant worker. Furnishing a whole house would be a big investment for someone who may only stay in New Zealand for a short period of time.

*Imagine what you would need if you arrived to work in another country with just a suitcase. Consider supplying:*

- curtains, floor coverings
- furniture – beds, table, chairs, couch, etc
- pots and pans, and perhaps a rice cooker
- crockery – plates, dishes, mugs, etc
- cutlery – knives, forks, spoons, etc
- bed sheets, blankets or quilts, pillows and towels
- cleaning equipment – vacuum cleaner, mop, etc
- whiteware – fridge and washing machine
- some basic foodstuffs
- heating and/or firewood
- internet connection
Migrant workers need on-farm accommodation that is in good repair, and is comfortable, warm, and well-equipped. Many migrant dairy workers bring their family so the accommodation may need to be big enough for the worker and his/her family.

If your farm accommodation is shared accommodation for a number of migrant workers, it is important to talk with them about the dynamic of shared accommodation, and to inform them that men and women may be sharing the accommodation. It is important that you inform them about this before they travel to New Zealand because this might be very different from what they are used to in their culture.

**The Internet:** If you are providing your employee with an internet connection or they wish to organise their own, take the time to talk to them about the internet in New Zealand (and in particular your region). They may be used to much faster and cheaper internet and need to understand how internet usage works on your farm, including availability, reliability and costs involved.
Tips from Sharron Davie-Martin, winner of the 2011 New Zealand Dairy Business of the Year:

› Show new migrant workers how things are done here – because living conditions can be very different in New Zealand.

› Show them the basics such as how to use cleaning equipment, how to operate cooking, heating, and washing appliances, where to put the rubbish, what can and can’t go down the sink, and explain why the house needs to be aired out.

› Set clear expectations about keeping your accommodation in good order.

› Inform migrants about what will happen if there is any damage to the property.

› Let them know that you will inspect the house from time to time.

Three areas of change for migrant workers

■ Climate

A lot of migrants come from warmer climates. They say that one of the most difficult things about coming to work in New Zealand is getting used to our variable climate. New Zealand has relatively high levels of harmful Ultra Violet (UV) radiation. The UV radiation does not provide heat, so migrants need to be aware they can burn and damage their skin even when they feel cool (on a cloudy day, for example), unless they have UV protection.
**Clothing**

Having the right gear for working on a farm is something migrant workers may need some advice about (for example, warm clothes for winter, wearing layers, and avoiding wearing cotton during winter).

It is a legal requirement for you to supply all protective clothing and equipment for your employees.

**Cooking**

Most migrants like to eat the foods they have grown up eating. It may help to find out where they can buy their own kind of food.

**TIP — In some cases it may be helpful to provide a rice cooker**
Settling in your migrant worker

What to do when new migrants arrive

TIPS

Tips from Justine Kidd, CEO, BEL Group

Helping your migrant workers to adjust will mean they will become better workers, faster.

On arrival:

› Meet your workers when they arrive and give them a tour of the area - focus on schools, recreational activities, supermarkets and shops where you will expect them to pick up supplies from.

› Give them a welcome kit that includes local community information as well as important contact details (including your own).

› Show them how to use the domestic equipment you have provided – e.g. heating, washing, cooking, cleaning.
Help by showing them where to buy food, clothes, and other basic needs, and the location of medical centres.

Help them or give them some time to make personal arrangements such as opening a bank account, or organising an IRD number.

Help them to get connected – phone, internet and electricity connections can be difficult for migrants to manage.

Take them to buy some wet weather gear, gumboots and other on-farm basics.

Help them organise transport, check they have a valid licence, understand our driving laws and the importance of being insured, and check that they are safe behind the wheel (the New Zealand Transport Agency has a useful guide “What is different about driving in New Zealand” available at www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/whats-diff-driving-nz/).

Put on a social event to welcome your new worker (and their family) to the team or to the neighbourhood.

Let them know about any social activities, religious groups or clubs they can join.

Have a list of other locally employed people from the same country, or take them along to meet local farm teams where you know they have migrant workers from the same country.

Make sure you check in with them weekly (when they first arrive) and then monthly, to make sure they have everything they need.

Make sure you know the date their work visa expires so that down the track you can plan to help them apply for a new one well before it runs out (at least ten weeks before current visa expires).

**TIP** — Provide laminated instructions (comprising words and images) next to each piece of equipment for handy reference. This will ensure the safety of your employee and the lifetime of the equipment.
Welcome kit

Farmers in the Amuri District have developed a welcome kit for their new workers. They sit down and go through the kit with their new workers when they arrive.

The kit contains information on:

- what to do in an emergency
- local community health services
- school enrolment forms
- the local area
- Justice of the Peace contact details
- obtaining an IRD number and tax in New Zealand
- driving in New Zealand (warrant of fitness, car registration, insurance, driver licensing)
- local shops and banks
- rubbish collection and disposal
- sending and receiving mail
- local places of worship
- embassy contact details for different nationalities
- using Language Line, an interpreting service for migrants
- other key community contacts

IMAGE BELOW: Alex Thompson (left), migrant dairy farm worker Stella Sales, Sharron Davie-Martin and in front Robert Thompson showing their new worker welcome kit.
The kit also contains:

**Immigration New Zealand’s Living and working on a New Zealand dairy farm: A guide for migrant dairy farm workers**

**Immigration New Zealand’s factsheets on minimum employment rights**

**TIP — Community health care services:** When showing employees local healthcare services, explain the costs involved, and advise them to register with a local GP as soon as possible.

**Orientation**

*Tailored orientation for your migrant worker can be helpful because it:*

› sets out your expectations
› helps your new employee become familiar with your farm
› means fewer mistakes are made.
Most orientation programmes include information about:

- the farm and the daily routine
- people’s roles and responsibilities
- your expectations about their work
- their employment rights and obligations
- health, safety, and hazards.

Going the extra mile for your new farm worker:

- Provide a basic farm manual. Migrants might find written instructions much easier to understand than listening to instructions. A manual is also a useful way to share all the information that only you know. Make it short and simple, with photos or diagrams to explain tasks. A farm map is also useful.

- Pair your migrant worker up with a buddy. A buddy is someone who knows what to do and can work alongside a migrant worker and explain things as they go along. On small farms this might be you.
Provide a thorough orientation. Migrants are new to our dairy industry. They may have never seen or operated a rotary milking system, used a chain saw or a quad bike, handled and applied chemicals, or been around a large herd before.

Make sure your migrant can safely operate farm vehicles and machinery. Provide training so that staff can clearly identify hazardous tasks and/or equipment that they can’t operate until fully trained. You have the same responsibility for the safety of migrant workers at work as you do for all other employees.

Help your migrant worker to set up a bank account. Ensure they know their local banking options and provide them with a letter with their address details. Banks in New Zealand have lots of experience in helping migrants and many of them have multilingual migrant advisors.

For more information see Dairy NZ’s orientation checklist which is part of the HR Toolkit at tinyurl.com/nzdairyhrkit

**TIPS**

Get to know your migrant workers and make yourself available to answer questions or help with new tasks. Let them know that it is ok to ask questions, at any time.

*Tip from Kim Solly and Jeremy Casey, experienced employers of migrants:*

We use a step by step approach when training:

**Step 1** – Show them

**Step 2** - Watch them

**Step 3** – Leave them to it, but check their work.
Training Needs

Contact the Primary Industry Training Organisation (Primary ITO) on (04) 801-9616 or take a look at their website at www.primaryito.ac.nz for more information about any of your training needs.

They offer, amongst other courses:

- a National Certificate in Agriculture (General Skills) Level 2
- a National Certificate in Agriculture (Animal Feeding and Pastures) Level 3
- Mastitis Management
- programmes in dealing with Dairy Farm Effluent
- a National Certificate in Agriculture (Production Management) Level 5
- Fonterra Growsafe courses
- Milk Quality Stage One (Milk Harvester)
The New Zealand workplace

A word about New Zealand employment law
Migrant workers are protected by the minimum entitlements in law.

- Employment agreements and maintaining records
  New Zealand employment law applies to all migrant workers.

  You must provide a signed current written employment agreement to your migrant workers. Give a copy of this signed agreement to your employee to keep. A clearly written employment agreement can help reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

  Migrants may not be familiar with New Zealand employment law and practice. It is all the more important for them to have copies of their employment agreement and pay slips so that they can take their time to read and understand them.

  › An employer must pay employees at least the relevant minimum wage, set annually under the Minimum Wage Act 1983.

  › The minimum wage must be paid for each hour worked on the farm. Wages cannot be averaged over a season.

  › Employees must be paid their wages in money, and cannot be paid through other non-cash benefits.

  › Employees can, however, agree to deductions from their wages by their employer before payment, including for the provision of accommodation or other goods or services.

  › A record of hours worked, wages payable (and paid), and leave taken must be kept.
Annual holidays

Many migrant workers are not used to having the right to take at least four weeks of paid annual holidays/leave once they have completed a year of employment. They may not know about their entitlement to 8% of their gross earnings if their employment is for less than one year.

If you employ migrant workers on a fixed-term employment agreement of less than a year, or as a casual worker with intermittent or irregular work patterns, they can agree to have 8% of their gross earnings added to their regular pay instead of receiving it when they end their employment or take holidays. However, you need to specify this arrangement in their written employment agreement and the amount of annual leave/holiday pay advanced in each period must be recorded as a separate identifiable amount from the wages.

For more information about annual leave and holidays: Visit www.dol.govt.nz/nzholidays1
Public holidays

Migrant workers will understand public holidays, but they will need to know when New Zealand public holidays occur. They need to know that when public holidays fall on days they would normally work they are entitled to have the days off work and be paid as if they had worked them. If they work on a public holiday they are entitled to receive time-and-a-half for the hours they work and if the public holiday they work on is a day they would normally work then they are also entitled to another day off on full pay.

Sick leave

Migrant workers will need to have sick leave entitlements explained to them. The five days’ paid sick leave each year after six months’ continuous employment is straightforward. However, they may not realise that sick leave can be used not only when they are sick or injured, but also when their spouse or partner, or a person who depends on them for care (such as a child or elderly parent) is sick or injured. Many migrant workers may not have a GP, so if you are expecting a doctor’s certificate for any sick leave taken, this may be difficult for them. If they are sick before they have worked for six months you can explain that they can ask to use some of their annual leave or take unpaid leave.

My wife is sick. Can I take leave?
**Bereavement leave**

Bereavement leave is a challenging area for migrant workers as many live so far from their family and home. It is often unrealistic for a migrant worker to take their entitlement of three days’ leave after six months employment to fly home to family. However they may need this time to grieve and it is important to make sure they know that this paid leave can be taken for the death of their spouse, child, brother or sister, mother or father, grandparent, grandchild, or parent of their spouse. Some cultures consider cousins as ‘brothers’ or ‘sisters’ so you need to explain that for other bereavements they may be entitled to one days’ leave.

If your migrant worker needs more time than is allowed for bereavement leave you can explain that they can ask to use some of their annual leave or take unpaid leave.

**The minimum wage**

Most migrant workers will be aware of the adult minimum wage rates because of the immigration information they receive. They usually know that the rates are reviewed every year.

For more information about wage rates
Visit www.dol.govt.nz/nzwages

**The 90-day trial period**

You are able to offer trial periods to new employees. Any trial period that you agree to with a new employee must be agreed to in good faith as part of their written employment agreement.

The written employment agreement must be signed by both you and your employee before you begin your employment relationship. A signed agreement may reduce the risks of a legal challenge.
If your migrant employee is dismissed from your employment under the terms of the 90-day trial period, this is a change in their circumstances. Migrant workers’ visa applications state that they must advise Immigration New Zealand if there is any change to their circumstances. For more information on support and protection for workers employed on a 90-day trial visit the website below:

**www.dol.govt.nz/90days**
Phone: Immigration New Zealand Contact Centre 0508 558 855

**Deductions**

Migrant workers come here to earn and it is helpful to explain their pay-slip to them. Any deductions from their pay need to be explained carefully and agreed to by them in writing. It is helpful for them to know about deductions required by law (such as PAYE tax) that do not require their written consent.

**Deductions for employee accommodation**

If accommodation is supplied to the employee, the employer and employee may agree that the cost of that accommodation will be deducted from the employee’s wages before they are paid.

The agreed value of accommodation deducted before payment of wages will be included as “wages” for Minimum Wage Act calculation purposes.

Any agreement relating to accommodation should clearly detail the accommodation arrangement and its cost to the employee, which should be reasonable. The wage records should include the wages payable before any deduction is made for the agreed value of accommodation.

Where there is no specific agreement as to the cost of accommodation an employer can deduct 15% of the employee’s wages calculated at the relevant minimum wage rate for board or 5% for lodging.
For Minimum Wage Act purposes, board is considered to mean the provision of both accommodation and meals while lodging means the provision of accommodation only.

The rental or accommodation agreement should be either separate from the employment agreement or able to be separated.

For more information on employment relations, pay, holidays and health and safety go to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment’s website or call the Ministry’s helpline.

A safe workplace

You must provide a safe workplace for your workers with the right training, supervision and equipment. There are many hazards on the farm and injuries are commonly caused by:

- animals
- accidents on vehicles, such as quad bikes, motorbikes, and tractors
- lifting heavy objects
- slips, trips and falls, often around the dairy milking shed
- hazardous substances, such as cleaning chemicals or sprays.
When new employees start work, you must tell them what to do in an emergency (such as a fire or chemical spill) and where emergency equipment and/or first aid kits are kept. You must also tell them how to report any hazard, accident or near miss.

Ensure migrant workers have enough information, training or knowledge to carry out a task.

**The law also says employees must do all they can to be safe when working.**

**Employers must provide training to ride quad bikes safely and employees must wear a safety helmet. Employers and workers may be prosecuted if there is an accident and the law has not been followed.**

### Fire Safety

- Make sure that you provide smoke alarms (and regularly change the batteries) in your employees’ accommodation.

- Talk to your employee about where it’s ok for them to have fires and rules around fires in New Zealand as this might be very different from their home countries where they may cook on an open fire indoors.
Why didn’t he use his initiative and tell us about the problem?

Perhaps he thinks he has to be asked before he can speak.

Everyone works in the same way don’t they?
Yeah right!

Ever wondered why some of your migrants work differently from you?
Different cultures value different behaviours.
Different values can affect how people think and act in the workplace.

What are Kiwis like at work?

Compared to workers from other parts of the world Kiwis:

› expect everyone to be treated the same

› respect the boss but usually speak to him or her in a relaxed way and are willing to make suggestions

› like to work on their own without being closely supervised

› are willing to turn their hand to a range of tasks, not just those they were hired to do.
What are migrants like at work?

Migrant workers come to New Zealand from different cultures and ways of working. This can affect the way you work with and manage your migrant workers.

For example, there are cultural differences in management style preferences. Some migrants may not be used to a female manager. Some migrant dairy farm workers come from countries where they are used to being told exactly what to do and they find Kiwi workers and managers very different from what they’re used to. In the chart on the following page you can see that:

- Filipinos have a high score so most of them like to be told exactly what to do
- Kiwis have a low score so most of them like to be left to get on with the job

Some cultures think status is very important and might find it difficult to speak freely to the boss. When they do speak to the boss they can be very formal, and they often don’t say what they really think.
Cultural difference in management-style preferences

0 = LIKE TO BE LEFT TO GET ON WITH THE JOB
100 = LIKE TO BE TOLD EXACTLY WHAT TO DO

My new guys like to be told exactly what to do but I can’t be there all the time. So, I wrote a detailed job description, with a list of tasks, so they knew what they had to do and could just get on with it.
Here are some things people from different cultures say about the way they work

What would you say about how you work?

If you know how different cultures like to work it can help you to better understand and supervise your migrant workers when they first arrive. In fact everyone on your farm can benefit from knowing a bit about these differences.
What can you do to help your migrant understand the “Kiwi way”?  

› When migrants first arrive you might want to give them a bit more direction than your Kiwi workers.  

› Get someone to be their ‘buddy’ so they can explain things as they come up.  

› Prepare a written list of tasks.  

› Prepare written information about how you operate – who does what, hours of work, timings of breaks, etc.  

› Find out about the values and work styles of the migrant worker’s country.  

› Find out how they might prefer to be managed.  

› Explain how things are usually done in New Zealand.  

› Tell your existing workers that a new migrant is arriving, and where they come from, so they can help. Let them read this guide.

Different qualifications and skill levels  

It is important to understand what your employee’s qualifications and skill set translate to in a New Zealand context.

For example an employee may state that they can drive a tractor but the type of tractor they have been driving in their country may be very different from the tractor on your farm.  

A university qualification from their home country may not equate to a New Zealand university qualification.
Language and communication

For some migrants, differences in language communication styles will be particularly important to consider.

**Does it take a while to get your message across?**

Kiwis can use lots of informal language at work, including slang and swear words. This makes it difficult for migrants who have learnt very formal English and even for migrants whose first language is English. And there are migrants who never swear, even in their own language. Some migrant workers are very offended by bad language and shouting and it puts them off their work.

When he first arrived we thought his English wasn’t up to the job.  

Kiwis have a strange accent and speak so fast. It took me a while to ‘tune in’.
Migrant workers want to do well and are keen to improve. Words used on your farm such as quad bike, four-wheeler, bobby calf, bovine, colostrum, drench, heifer, herringbone, lameness, IV, mastitis, metal road, silage, ute, etc might be completely new to them. You could help them learn these new words by writing them down. A list of these types of words is also available in the Living and Working on a New Zealand dairy farm guide – you could go through this section with your employee and add any additional words to it that are commonly used on your dairy farm.

Farmers who take the time to help their employees with new words usually see improvements in productivity.

More communication tips can be found in the cards at the back of this guide.

Just because someone has a strong accent, it doesn’t mean they have poor English skills or can’t do the job.
TIPS

Tips from Willy Leferink, former Federated Farmers Dairy Chairperson, Ashburton dairy farmer, and one of the advocates for this guide.

› Encourage them to talk slowly and pause if you are having difficulty understanding them.

› Be very clear when giving instructions.

› Provide important instructions in writing if necessary.

› Try using pictures and maps to explain things rather than words.

› Use simple direct language and explain complicated words and jargon.

› Try not to swear or yell – it can cause offence.

› Use a notice board, whiteboards and signs in the workplace.

› Check understanding of instructions by asking your worker to repeat what they have to do: I ask them, “So, what are you going to do first?”

› Remember, a migrant’s culture can make it difficult to question the boss. Don’t take advantage of this - you need to make sure they have reasonable working hours.

For more information on workplace communication go online to:
Worktalk.immigration.govt.nz
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- DairyNZ
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A copy of this guide is available online

Visit: www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/guides