



## Mentoring Handbook



#### Joint venture partners



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## INTRODUCTION

**Career mentoring can provide some of the most sought-after attributes that employers look for as the mentee gains industry awareness and firsthand knowledge of the challenges of life in the workforce. While the mentor gains a chance for self and career reflection.**

The relationship is based upon encouragement, constructive feedback, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

A mentor provides support, a sounding board, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback to the mentee by developing a genuine interest in the growth of their abilities and talents.

**Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals.**

A mentee actively seeks support and guidance in their career and professional development from an experienced professional. A mentee always has ultimate responsibility for their career and professional development.





## THE MENTORING PROGRAM

Each intake of the DairyBio and DairyFeedbase mentoring program will run for 18 months; with a six month overlap of the preceding and succeeding mentoring group. The mentoring coordinator will match mentees with a suitable mentor and support the principles of life-long learning and knowledge sharing that underpins the program.

**Mentors** will ideally have at least five years' experience in the science/dairy/business fields. Mentors will have excellent communication skills, a desire to contribute to the future of the dairy industry and the time to commit to once a month catch-ups with your mentee and five group events for the duration of the program.

**Mentees** may be PhD students involved in DairyBio or DairyFeedbase. They must commit to proactively communicating with their mentor and organising catchups or virtual meetings once a month with your mentor plus attend four to five group events for the duration of the program.

**Mentoring program champions** the role of the program champions is to provide additional support to mentors and mentees participating in the program, to ensure that mentors and mentees are benefiting from the mentorship. There will be a Mentor Champion and a Mentees Champion. Mentor and mentee champions may contact mentors and mentees during the program to check how the mentorship is progressing and to provide advice or tips that may be helpful to the participants.

There are many **mutual benefits** of participating in a mentoring program for the mentor and mentees, including:

#### MENTORS

- Contribute to the development of the future of the research and dairy industry
- Improve management, leadership and communication skills
- Expand professional networks
- Transfer of skills and knowledge
- Recognition of skills, knowledge and commitment the profession
- Reflection on current projects and operational practice
- Personal satisfaction from making a contribution to the industry

#### MENTEES

- Develop communication skills and knowledge
- Build professional networks and a support system
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Discuss and learn theoretical and practical issues with an industry professional
- A confidential opportunity to discuss workplace/University issues
- Receive support and guidance to achieve career goals

#### EMPLOYER OF MENTORS AND MENTEES

- Increased productivity by both mentor and mentee
- Improved management and technical skills
- Discovery of latent talent and re-motivation of senior staff (mentors)

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS AND MENTEES

- Act ethically and with respect towards all other participants
- Maintain strict confidentiality and professional boundaries
- Commitment to attend all prearranged meetings
- Discuss expectations in the first meeting review as meetings progress



## MENTOR'S ROLE

### Specific responsibilities include:

- Sign Mentoring Agreement with mentee
- Negotiate a commitment for ongoing communication
- Lead initial meetings with mentees
- Assist mentee to identify individual needs and support career development
- Contribute to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings
- Participate in 6, 12 and 18-month reviews of the mentee and mentoring relationship; and
- Attend events held by program partners
- Participate in program evaluation and review

### The mentor may achieve these in a variety of ways by:

- Challenging assumptions
- Encouraging the exploration of new ideas and innovative thinking
- Being open minded and non-judgemental
- Listening to the mentees' questions and problems
- Assisting the mentee to identify and solve problems
- Providing appropriate and timely advice
- Encouraging an understanding of career options and outcomes; and
- Sharing professional experiences providing a different view of the matter under discussion

### A successful and effective mentor has:

- Respect and consideration for the mentee
- A high level of expertise and knowledge of planning
- A genuine interest in the mentees' growth and development
- A commitment to the mentoring program
- Highly developed communication skills (particularly listening, questioning and giving constructive feedback); and

## MENTEE'S ROLE

- Sign Mentoring Agreement with mentor
- Negotiate a commitment for ongoing communication
- Attend information sessions or activities for mentees to be held by program partners
- Initiate the organisation of all meetings (e.g. develop a schedule of meetings agreed by the mentor)
- Organise an (informal or formal) agenda of discussion topics for meetings
- Contribute to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings
- Participate in 6, 12- and 18-month reviews of the mentoring relationship; and
- Explore own strengths and development needs

### The mentee may achieve their role by:

- Discussing topics that are part of their PhD studies
- Sharing their particular interests in dairy industry
- Reviewing their experiences as an early career researcher
- Discussing and developing their career goals
- Be willing to share their hopes, needs and expectations; and
- Always having an open frame of mind

### A successful mentee will:

- Organise all meetings with their mentor
- Commit to the mentoring program
- Take responsibility for their own personal and professional development and opportunities
- Seek constructive feedback; and
- Accept new responsibilities and challenges

## STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Stage 1

### Negotiating expectations and goals

- Mentoring program agreement
- Review the mentor/mentee checklists

Stage 2

### Establishing the relationship

- Getting to know each other
- Career/work history
- Identify development needs;
- Mentor to present work examples

Stage 3

### Development needs/ knowledge acquisition

- Identify opportunities to acquire knowledge together e.g. attend a professional development event
- Share and discuss a common dairy industry topic of interest

Stage 4

### Career development

- Career direction check-up
- Sharing each other's CV/review mentees CV

Stage 5

### Sustaining the relationship

- Keep in touch!



## MEETING 1

The first meeting is critical in establishing the foundations for the development of the mentorship but can be quite daunting for both the mentor and the mentee. The key to a successful mentorship is to ensure that both participants share the same objectives and expectations of the program. These should be discussed openly and negotiated within the partnership.

### Organising the first meeting

The mentee is responsible for contacting the mentor to organise a time and place for the first (and subsequent meetings) that is suitable for both participants.

### Discussion points tie commitment

It is essential that contact be maintained throughout the mentorship. It is recommended that participants meet (in person or virtually) once a month.

However, the level of time commitment needs to be discussed and negotiated between the mentor and mentee. Some partnerships may wish to meet monthly during the program or may supplement this with regular emails or phone calls.

### Preferred style of contact

Both the mentor and mentee need to decide whether contact during the mentorship will be formal or informal. Participants should also decide whether they want to follow the suggested program framework, discuss pre-prepared topics at their meetings or would prefer ad hoc discussions.

### Location

Both participants need to agree on a preferred location(s) to meet during the mentorship. Suggested locations include the mentor or mentee's office/university, a café or a park.

### Goals

Participants should discuss what they want to achieve through the mentoring program and how they will reach their goals.

## MENTORING RELATIONSHIP CLOSURE PROCESS

Mentoring relationships can end prematurely for many reasons, the decision to end the mentoring relationship will be treated as a 'no-fault' closure by DairyBio and DairyFeedbase and no reason needs to be given to the program partners. It is recommended that a final meeting be held to discuss the closure and the reasons behind it.

The conversation should include the following:

- Start with the good – talk about the highlights and positives from the relationship
- Communicate the reason(s) for ending the relationship – be honest and tell your mentor/mentee why you are ending the relationship. This may be difficult, but it is important and shows respect to the other party
- Give your mentor/mentee honest feedback – just because your relationship hasn't worked out doesn't mean they won't be successful in another mentoring relationship
- Above all the conversation should be respectful and professional so both parties can learn from the experience and reflect on what worked and what didn't

It is important to contact the program coordinators to notify them of the closure of the relationship. If either the mentor or mentee do not feel comfortable in closing the relationship the program coordinators are able to assist. The coordinators can act as the facilitator to professionally close the relationship. In these instances, the party instigating the closure should contact the coordinator as soon as the decision has been made so the relationship can be closed quickly. The coordinator will contact the other party and notify them of the closure of the relationship.

For more information please email the mentoring team [mentoring@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:mentoring@dairyaustralia.com.au)

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