

LIFE IS A BALANCING ACT

(by Graham Fletcher, Rural Adviser, McIntyre Dick & Partners)

In farming it is just not possible to simply sit back and let the grass grow under our feet.

It is essential to have a balance of the ingredients for a successful business. The list is simply huge from planning feed requirements, stock rotation, nutrient needs, staff issues, family matters, purchase and breeding of stock, community relationships, cash flow and making sure there is time for a holiday.

When a holiday is taken then it is important to rely on good family relationships, community or employee relationships.

Employment responsibilities are all too often taken lightly until something goes wrong.

It is critically important to be mindful of employee relationships both prior to and during employment.

Are you aware of how the following affect you?

- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Equal Pay Act 1972
- Minimum Wages Act 1983
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Holidays Act 1981
- Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1997
- Tenancy Act 1986
- Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992
- Wages Protection Act 1993.

And as a final thought do you have a staff plan?

So what is a staff plan? The best way to describe a staff plan is to say that it provides empowerment to employees by setting out who is responsible for what and where responsibilities lie. For the farmer it encourages team work by involving the employees in planning, using people's strengths and identifying needs for training.

With all this in place you will have

- achieved the best staffing levels
- developed successful teams
- worked on successful performance management
- developed a successful recruitment and selection process
- retained good staff.

By putting a staff plan in place you will know who should do what and when and you can take a break knowing that everything is being attended to.