

Alberta Milk Industry Job Definitions

Title:	Herdsmen
NOC Number:	8253 – Skilled livestock worker
Education:	High School and/or further agriculture education (or equivalent experience on a dairy farm)
Experience:	Minimum of 3 years proven experience working with dairy cows
Average Hourly Wage:	See Wage Grid

Duties

Herdsmen perform tasks such as the following on dairy farms:

- Monitor the health and well being of the dairy herd; recognize and treat health problems
- Ensure that water is available and the cows are fed the correct amount and type of feed
- Milk cows
- Carry out breeding and/or artificial insemination
- Assist in births
- Implement a vaccination program and herd health
- Manipulate rations to match nutrition requirements of livestock
- Knowledge of dairy cattle record keeping procedures (DHI, CQM, registration, etc.)
- Knowledge and rudimentary service of milking equipment
- Interact with external farm service personnel
- Supervise employees
- Maintain equipment and do repairs
- Keep paper and electronic records
- Transport feed and supplies
- Operate and maintain equipment

Working Conditions

Herdsmen have the opportunity to interact closely with dairy cows. They may work split shifts to coincide with the milking times. Milking is done inside; however, other duties are often outside in all kinds of weather. Although automation and mechanization have helped to make the work less tedious and physically demanding, repetitive manual labour is often required. They must follow safety precautions to avoid injury when working with machinery and tools, wear protective clothing and follow good animal hygiene practices to prevent or control the spread of diseases. Modern barns are well ventilated and manure is flushed out regularly. Herdsmen may routinely lift items weighing up to 20 kilograms or more.

Farm workers are not covered by labour standards, occupational health and safety, or Workers Compensation legislation in Alberta.

Personal Characteristics

Herdsmen need the following characteristics:

- Good health and stamina (physically fit, not allergic to grains, feeds, animals or dust)
- Good coordination and manual dexterity
- The ability to follow instructions and work with little supervision
- A genuine interest in agriculture and willingness to learn
- A responsible, caring attitude when handling equipment and animals
- Interact with coworkers in a pleasant and civil manner
- Flexibility and adaptability

All farm workers should enjoy having clear rules and organized methods for their work, operating and maintaining equipment and monitoring the health of livestock.

Educational Requirements

The education and training requirements for Herdsmen is post-secondary, Ag education is preferred.

Relevant Skills

The following skills are beneficial, but not required

- Truck/Tractor/Equipment basic operation and maintenance
- Handyman skills
- Cow clipping and preparation
- First aid

Employment and Advancement

To advance, Herdsmen will require farm experience and may require related education such as the Alberta Green Certificate Training Program, Olds College agriculture courses or Lakeland College Dairy Program or management courses.