

List of Questions asked through SLI.DO at the 2018 Rural Connectivity Symposium, 26th June.

Asked during the presentation of Krissy Sadler-Bridge

Question	Score	Answer
Couldnt the problem of staff recruitment on farms be solved by better wages and conditions?	5	<p>It can certainly have an impact and of course having better wages and conditions is an important aspect to any job across all industries. What the agricultural industry has struggled with is finding talent that are prepared for 4am starts, working on the weekends - cows still need to be milked on Saturday & Sunday and it can be hard graft.</p> <p>But at the same time I believe it to be a massively rewarding industry to work in. Farm employees can benefit from accommodation on farm or nearby, perks such as home kill meat and if you have a great farm manager or owner to work with it can be like being part of the family!</p> <p>Here's a couple of tips outside of wages that could help attract employees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. People like working with good tools: we all prefer to work with new gear that doesn't breakdown and makes tasks easier. Invest in good tools that make farm life easier for the team.2. On farm technology: staff can find it really interesting to work on farms that are adopters of technology whether that's automated milking machinery or utilising drones to check on livestock – it can make a job really interesting and will resonate well with the millennial workforce.3. Support employees: it's important for farm owners and managers to take time to find out what's important in the lives of their employees – it could be to support them in what they love to do outside work or help them if they have aspirations to be a farm manager. <p>You can read more on the MYOB Blog</p>

<p>How can we increase mobile accessibility to more rural areas. So many still don't have it.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>That's absolutely right, I was at dairy farm in the Marlborough Sounds and no mobile connectivity across the farm. The biggest worry I felt was the impact from a health and safety aspect and access to emergency services if things went wrong.</p> <p>The key to mobile accessibility will be seeing collaboration of WISPs working alongside major telcos and the RCG.</p>
<p>Chrissy, what are the barriers to the take-up of improved technology take-up in the rural sector?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>I think it's very similar as to what we see across all sections of the NZ population as to why we see a technology divide - from income, geographical location or to having the knowledge / know-how to use technology.</p> <p>I believe education is a huge requirement to improve the take-up. Education needs to be focused on the benefits that the rural sector will see from investing hard earn cash into new technologies. That benefit needs to be shown in increased productivity, yields or better staff satisfaction to encourage rural business to adopt.</p> <p>But the rural sector is well ahead in regards to the take up of technology and is really leading the way in some aspects. For example driverless cars has been a big news story in the last couple of years but the rural sector has had driverless tractors for about a decade!</p>
<p>How much of a factor is connectivity impacting employment opportunities?</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Great question, I'm sure it's having an impact and will certainly continue to do so as more and more millennials are entering the workforce – this is a generation that have grown up with technology and trying to convince a city/town dweller to move to a rural area with no connectivity is going to be seriously tough.</p> <p>Whether it's using technology on farm to make work life easier or using it to keep in contact with friends and up-to-date on content then I believe it absolutely can impact rural businesses being seen as favourable work places.</p>
<p>Sometimes recruitment issues are the limitation or absence of skills and competence.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>That's right and it's again the same factor that every industry has to grapple with – finding great staff with the right skills.</p>

		<p>The idea of being able to own your own farm these days is nearly impossible if your family doesn't own one and even the investment to become milk sharers is becoming tougher. As a result it can have an impact on people wanting to enter the industry as it's becoming increasingly difficult to see the career journey of worker to owner.</p> <p>As a result it maybe impacting peoples career choices which will result in different education choices. I think there's a huge opportunity for the industry to encourage people to enter it's workforce and showcase the benefits, skills and growth opportunities that employees can enjoy. If it's seen as a viable industry to join people will seek out the required education and gain the right skills.</p> <p>Have a listen to the MYOB Fieldays Tech panel session (we played a part of it during my presentation), have a listen at 7.06 Terry Copeland CEO of Young Farmers talking about the next generation entering the rural industry: MYOB Fieldays Tech Panel</p>
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