

About the Primary Industries sector

What's the work like?

There's a huge range of jobs in this environmentally friendly sector, with a variety of experiences and opportunities on offer. You could work in the outdoors, in some of the most stunning landscapes in the world, planting, growing, or tending animals, trees, and crops. You may work alone, sometimes in isolated

places, or with a bunch of like-minded people who may become friends for life. Your work will change with the seasons, sometimes it's light, sometimes it's physically and mentally demanding. There's also plenty of sophisticated high-tech toys to play with and plenty of on-the-job training to help you learn to use them.

If you're not working directly on the land you may be visiting as an adviser to part of the industry – in arboriculture, water, or environmental management, the equine industry, or maybe as an accountant, mechanic, or vet.

Further from the farm, you could be in a processing plant, turning primary produce into value-added goods for sale and export. Here you'll be indoors, again working with high tech equipment and possibly working flexible hours – great if you're not keen on a regular 40-hour week.

You might work far from the farm in a big city office, organising shipping, or developing government policy. If you're into science and technology, you're valued in this sector, whether you're analysing data or contributing to the next world-leading agricultural breakthrough. Safety is a very strong focus in all parts of the sector because there's always an element of danger.

What's great about this sector?

There's a broad range and diversity of jobs from hands-on farm work to science or business roles and there are many opportunities to learn new skills and move into different areas of each industry. There's always something new as technology and equipment change constantly.

You can earn good money, work outdoors or indoors, alone or with mates, and play with some great technology.

It's a big sector for Māori with a large proportion of New Zealand's forests, fisheries, and dairy farms now



Māori-owned and operated. No matter what part of the sector you choose to work in, you're contributing to an important and sustainable sector that's one of New Zealand's biggest employers and major exporters.

If you care about the Earth and the environment it's a good place to be. Whether you're from a rural background or a townie, there's something here for you.

Will this sector suit me?

“I coordinate the work of 18 forestry production and thinning crews and usually spend two days in the bush and the other three in the office – so I get the best of both worlds.”

Delila, technical services coordinator



What qualities will I need?

In primary industries employers are looking for people who like being with and looking after living things – you’ll have a head start if you’re interested in and respect the environment, enjoy growing things, and believe in the ethical treatment of animals. If you like physical activity, being with mates, and enjoy being outdoors, there’s a job on the land for you.

An enthusiasm for technology is vital in all primary industries because there’s plenty of it, and because it’s always changing, you’ll need to keep up (there’s always plenty of training to help you). This sector suits people who are self-motivated and can use their initiative because you may be working on your own a lot and you need to be able to make decisions quickly.

In the primary industries there’s a lot of customer contact so you need to be good with people. Paying attention to detail also helps, as you may be working to exacting specifications. You could have a degree in anything from science to biology, polytech training in any one of dozens of industries, or enter the primary sector straight from school. There is a huge range of jobs in this sector – and plenty of room to change and grow.

What key competencies do employers look for?

THINKING

- You’ll be looking for ways to be as productive as possible, using your knowledge in lots of different situations, observing what’s happening around you, and managing risk to yourself and others.

MANAGING SELF

- You need to be able to work by yourself without supervision, be resilient, adaptable, reliable, and trustworthy.

- You need to keep fit and healthy.

PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING

- You'll be an active, willing, and positive contributor in your community.

USING LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND TEXTS

- You'll be able to read, write, and have practical maths skills, such as measuring, using plans, and entering and extracting basic information on computers.
- You'll be able to read instructions and safety guidelines.

RELATING TO OTHERS

- You'll be able to work in a team and play your part in it.

Jobs in the Primary Industries

“There are good stepping stones to make in the dairy industry. You can go from farm manager to sharemilker to owner. Just work hard and the opportunities will come.”

Jayden, sharemilker



WHAT WORK COULD I DO? »

Find out what type of work you could do, and what roles you could end up in if you took the Primary Industries pathway.

JOB PROFILES FOR THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES SECTOR »

Browse listings of jobs, link to information on the Careers New Zealand website, and see what level of qualification you might need for different jobs in this sector.

There are a huge number of roles and occupations available in this sector, ranging from entry level through to high level.

NCEA level 2 is the minimum you need for entry level jobs or apprenticeships. This gives you a good foundation in the skills and competencies you will need to go further. For other roles, you'll definitely need to further your education after school by undertaking tertiary study, or training on the job.

More information about all the roles listed here can be found on the [Careers New Zealand website](#), along with key information about the job, what it pays, and current opportunities. To find out the pay, prospects, and study costs of a number of jobs, you can also check out the [Occupation Outlook](#).

The asterisks in the following table show the level (or levels) of qualification usually associated with the role.

Sometimes you need a specific qualification to get into a job, but in many areas you can work towards higher qualifications by learning on the job. Check out the [job profiles on Careers NZ](#), or talk to your careers advisor to find out more.

	2	3-4-5	5-6	7	8-10
	NCEA LEVEL 2	CERTIFICATE	DIPLOMA	DEGREE	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE
Architectural Technician				*	
Agricultural/Horticultural Consultant				*	
Agricultural/Horticultural Scientist					*
Animal Attendant	*	*			
Aquaculture Farmer	*				
Arborist	*	*			

Beekeeper	*	*			
Biochemist				*	*
Biosecurity Officer			*	*	
Biotechnologist				*	*
Crop Farm Worker					
Crop Farmer	*	*	*		
Dairy Farmer	*		*		
Dairy Products Maker	*	*	*		
Dog Trainer	*		*		
Energy Auditor	*	*	*	*	*
Environmental Engineer				*	
Environmental Scientist				*	*
Farm Worker	*	*			
Farmer/Farm Manager	*	*	*		
Fencer	*	*			
Fishery Officer	*		*		
Fishing Skipper		*			
Food Technologist			*	*	*
Forester		*	*	*	
Forestry and Logging Worker	*	*			
Forestry Scientist				*	*
Gardener	*				
General Labourer	*	*			
Geologist				*	*
Geophysicist				*	*

Groundsperson	*	*			
Horse Trainer	*	*			
Hunter/Trapper	*	*			
Landscape Architect				*	
Landscape Gardener	*				
Marine Biologist				*	*
Meat Inspector		*			
Meat/Seafood Process Worker	*				
Microbiologist				*	*
Nursery Grower/Worker	*				
Packhouse Worker	*				
Production Manager			*	*	
Pulp and Paper Mill Operator	*	*			
Quarantine Inspector				*	
Ranger	*	*			
Saw Doctor	*	*			
Science Technician			*	*	
Shearer	*	*			
Stock and Station Agent	*	*			
Veterinarian				*	
Winemaker		*	*	*	
Wood Processing Worker	*				
Wool Classer	*	*			