



Agribusiness in Schools South Island Conference

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Chief Executive, DairyNZ

22 September 2026



Agenda

- **New Zealand Dairy Industry and DairyNZ.**
- Some insights as to the Dairy Workforce.
- Importance of Agribusiness in Schools.
- Questions - open discussion, any topic

The food and fibre sectors are powering New Zealand's economy



\$62.0 billion in export revenue

forecast for the year to 30 June 2026



82.9% of goods exports

for the year to 30 June 2025



12.4% of employment

for the year to 31 March 2024



15.3% of GDP

8.8% direct, 6.5% indirect, year to 31 March 2024



About DairyNZ

Who we are

- The industry-good organisation for New Zealand's 10,274 dairy farmers, funded by a milksolids levy (4.5 cents per kg MS)
- Independent and not-for-profit – we hold no commercial interests, so every cent is invested for farmers

What we represent

- Our purpose: deliver a positive future for New Zealand dairy farming
- Three priorities: drive productivity, strengthen farm systems, compete on sustainability

How we support farmers

- World-leading dairy science, run on real farms and turned into practical tools
- Evidence-based advocacy for workable regulation
- Regional teams alongside farmers, plus partnerships that scale our impact

+20y

Years of science

We're proud to be working alongside farmers to provide science solutions drawing from a +100 year history.

+850

Tools and resources

We have a breadth of useful tools and resources available to help farmers run their business throughout the seasons. They are tried and tested and have been developed using the latest science and research.

+\$62m

Invested

In 2024/25 DairyNZ invested around \$62 million on behalf of farmers, into a range of programmes to help deliver a positive future for New Zealand dairy.

+45

Research partners

Working together with others in the sector is an important part of how we collaborate to solve the longer-term challenges.

A good time to be a NZ dairy farmer

High milk prices



Strong red
meat prices

\$2.00 per share capital
return from Fonterra

The average
farm size
increased by
28.5%
between 2022
and 2023



Debt repayment of
\$1.7bn (6 months to
March 2025)

Reduced rate of
regulatory change



15% U.S.A
Tariffs

Interest rates
declining



Geo-political
uncertainty: conflicts
in Ukraine, Middle
East, Africa & Asia

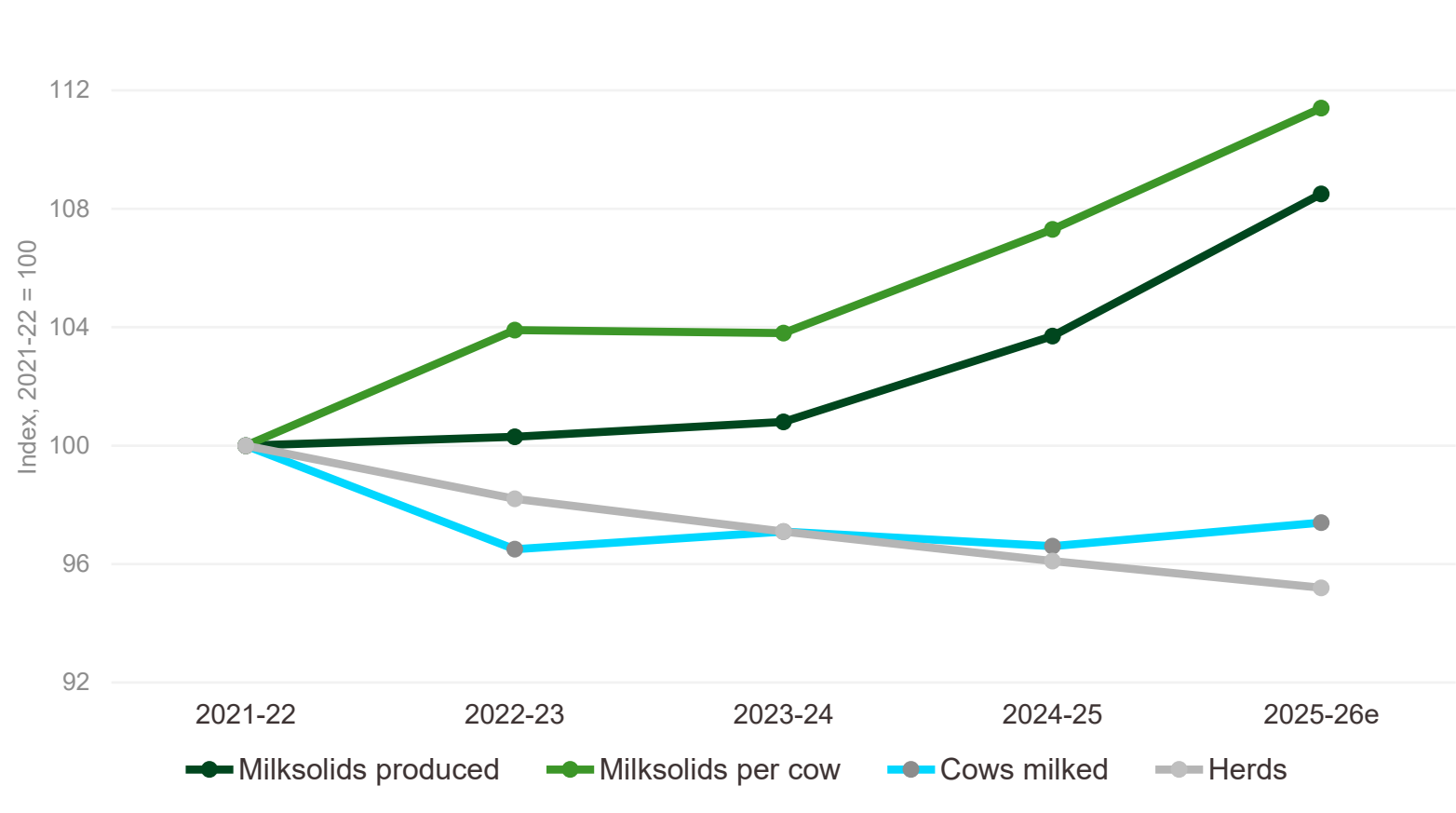
Promise of less
red tape in RMA

Farmer confidence is
up... 70% see dairy as
viable

But we know the market can be volatile and things can change fast.

Fewer farms, fewer cows, more milk

Five seasons of change, indexed to 2021-22 = 100



+8.5%

Milksolids produced
1,868m to 2,027m kgMS

+11.4%

Milksolids per cow
386 to 430 kgMS

-2.6%

Cows milked
4.84m to 4.72m

-4.8%

Herds
10,796 to 10,274

2025-26 was the first season above 2 billion kgMS, and it came off a flat land base.

Change 2021-22 to 2025-26 (estimated)

Future growth through innovation, not expansion

What the New Zealand dairy sector is aiming for by 2050

Growth used to mean

- More cows
- More land converted to dairy
- Higher input use



Growth now means

- Farm system redesign and precision technology
- Resource efficiency rather than more inputs
- Climate resilience, and expansion only where it fits

Sector goals for 2050

Production and profit

+20%

milk solids production

+13%

sector profitability

Environment and nature

-20%

nitrogen leaching per
hectare

+60%

riparian planting

+50%

protected wetland area

Agenda

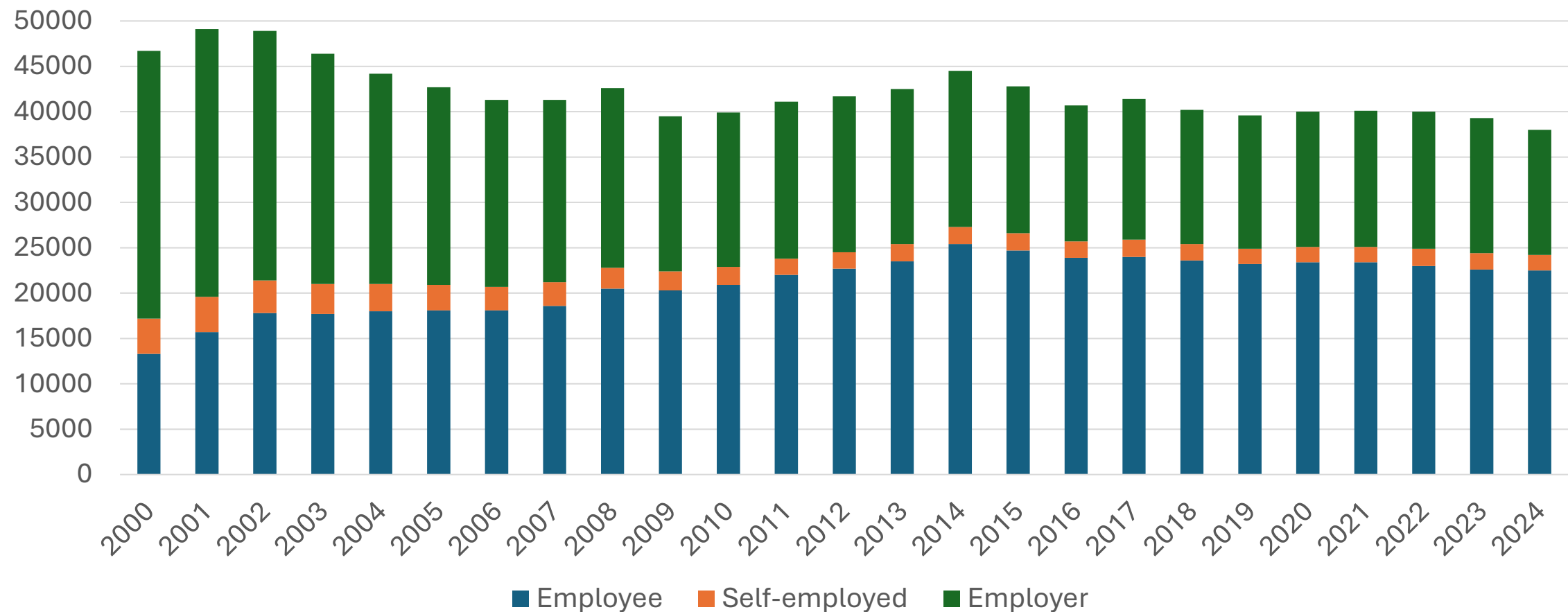
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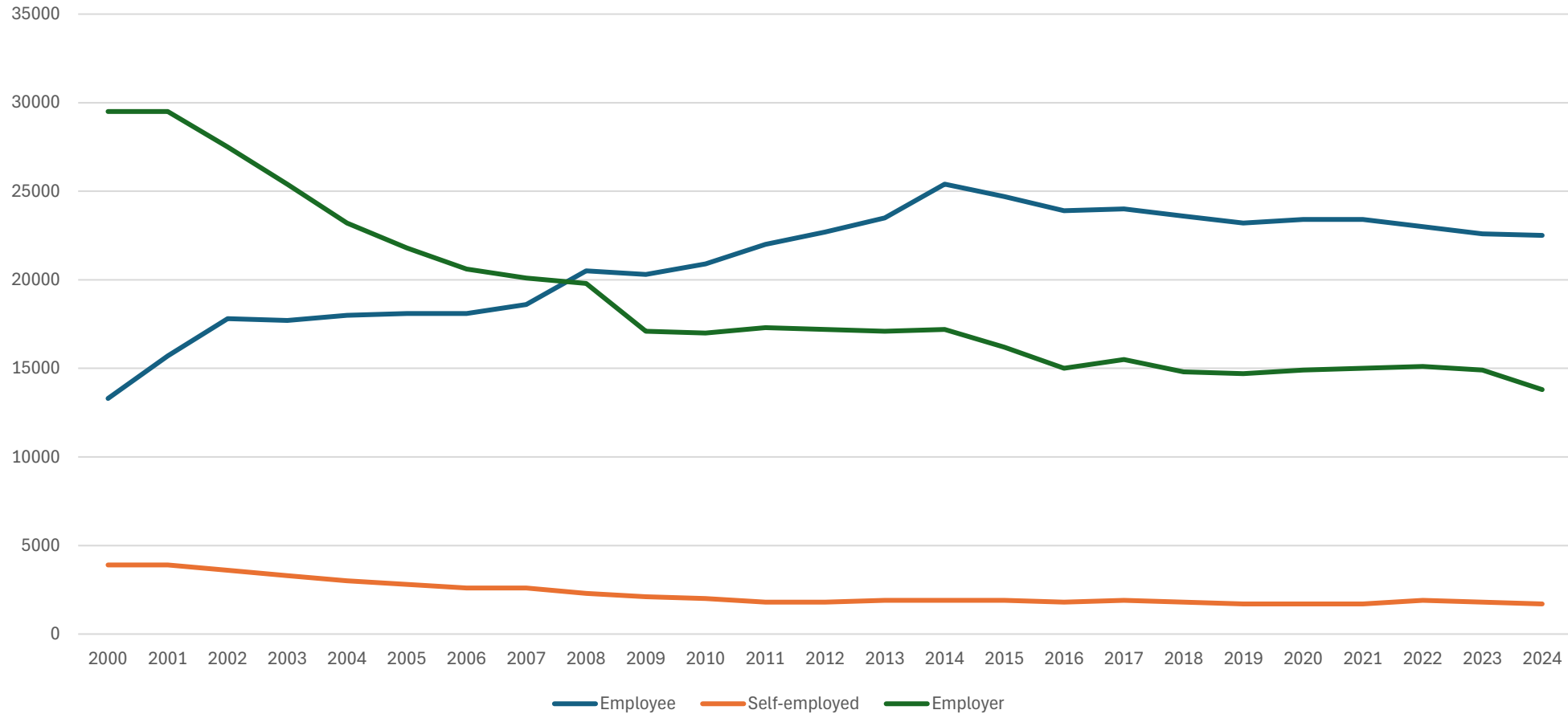
The dairy workforce has changed

- less people
- employee impact is bigger
- diversity has increased
- gender balance has room to improve

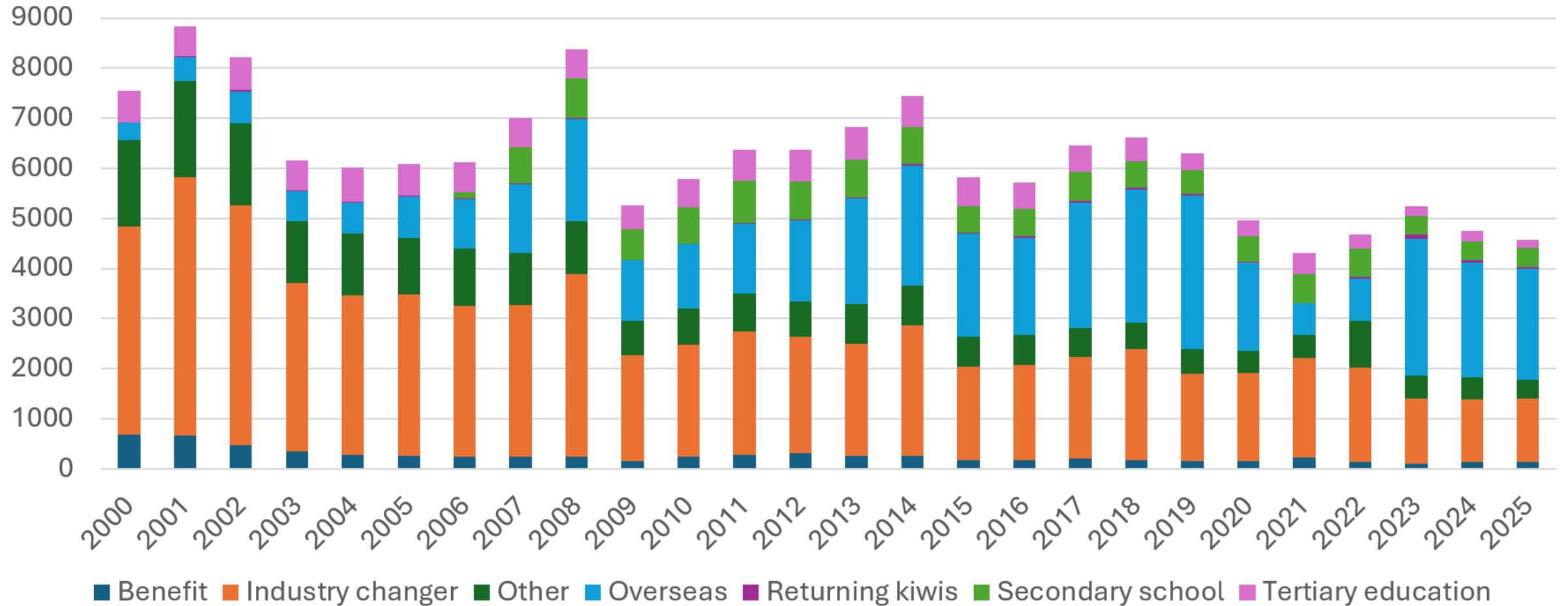
Total annual workforce – by employment type



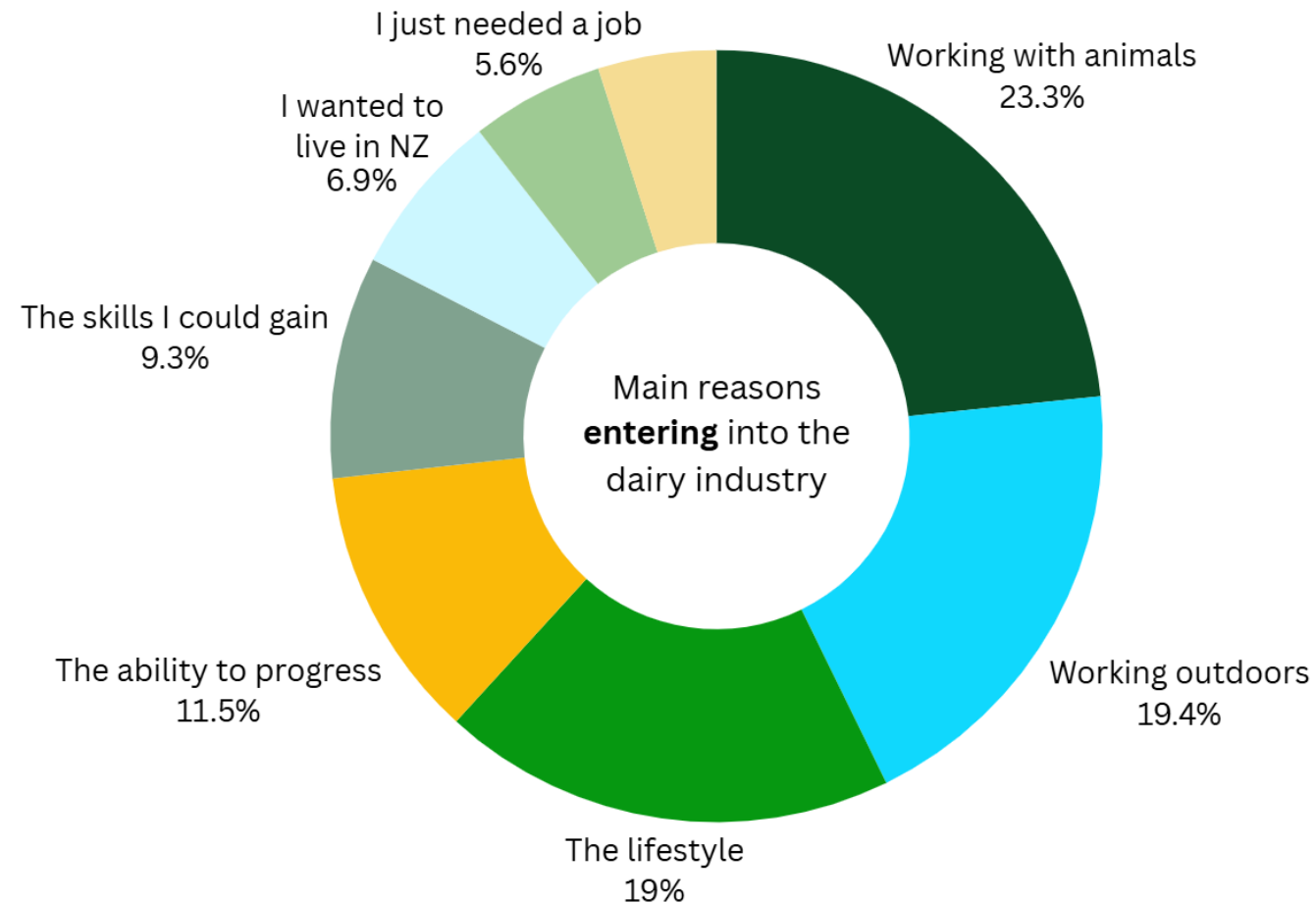
Changing ownership increasing employee impact



New entrants to dairy – by prior occupation

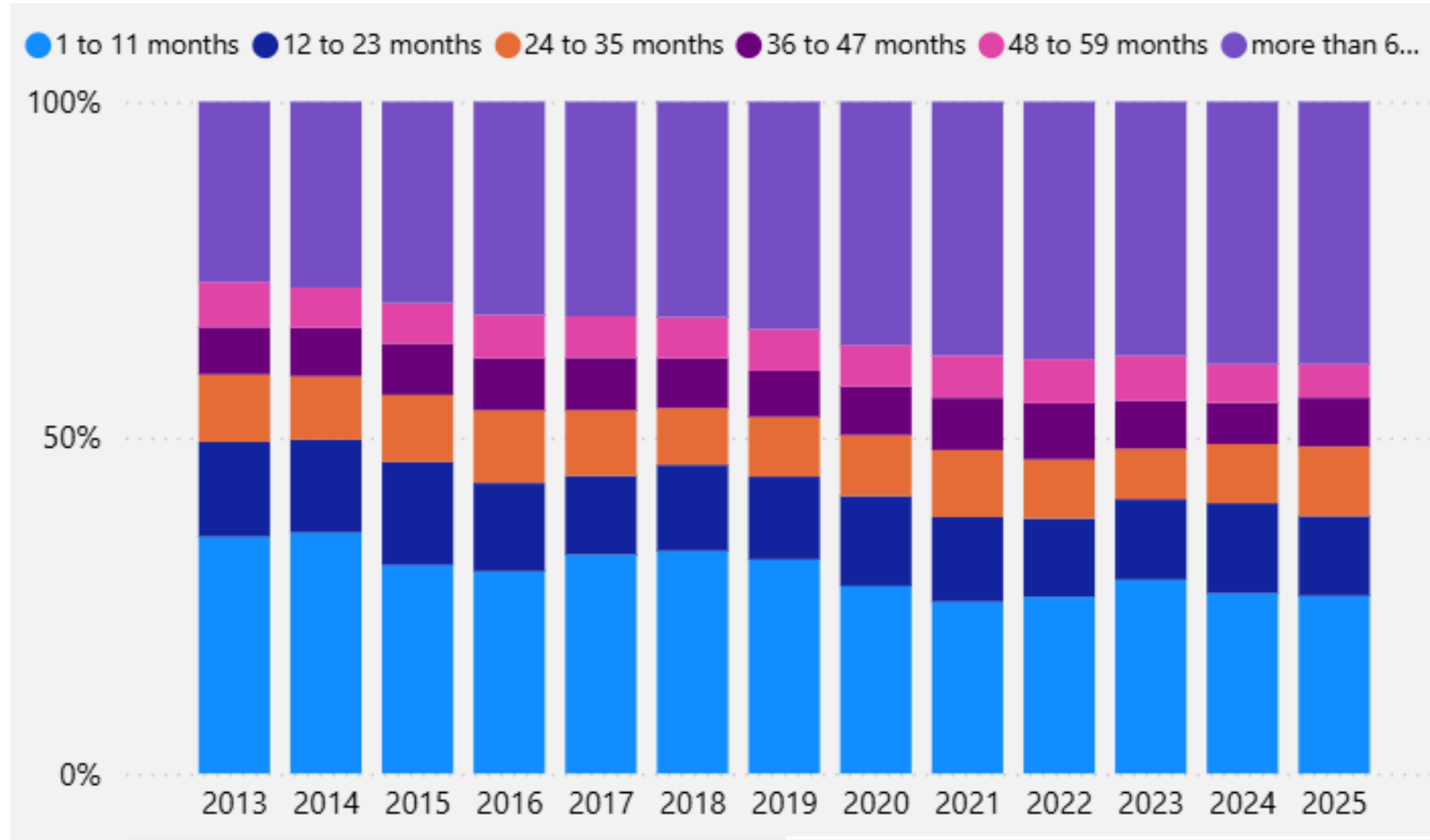


Main reasons of respondents decision to enter the dairy industry (n=374), 2025

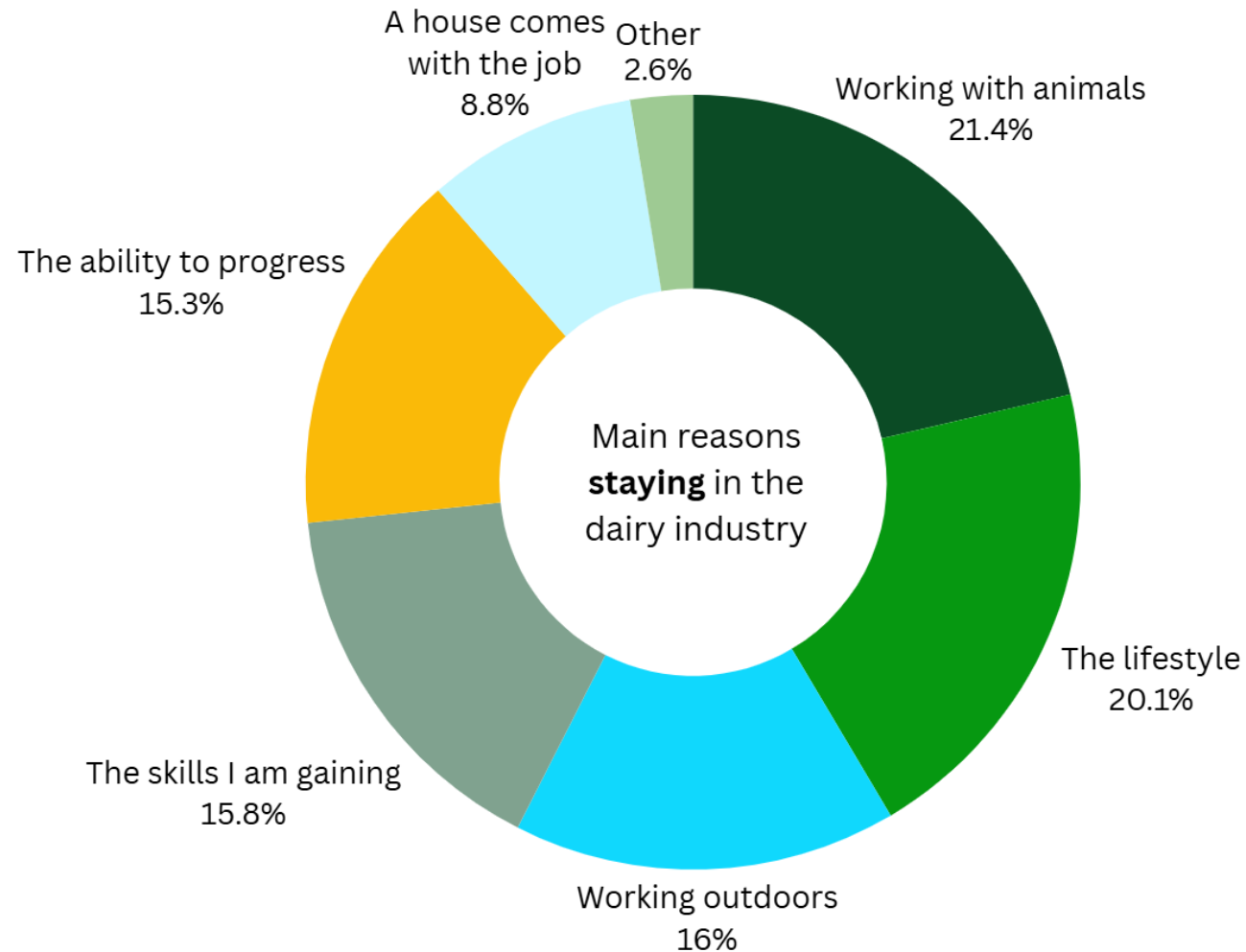


Dairy workforce industry tenure over time

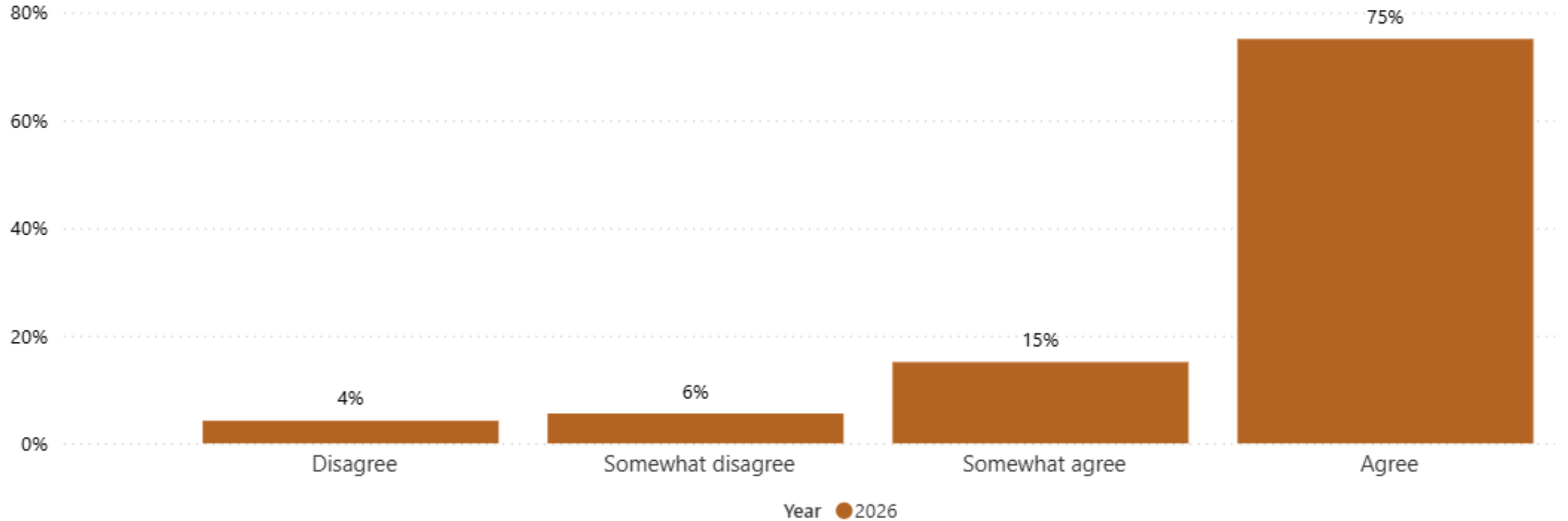
Employee's only



Main reasons of respondents decision to remain in the dairy industry (n=374), 2025.



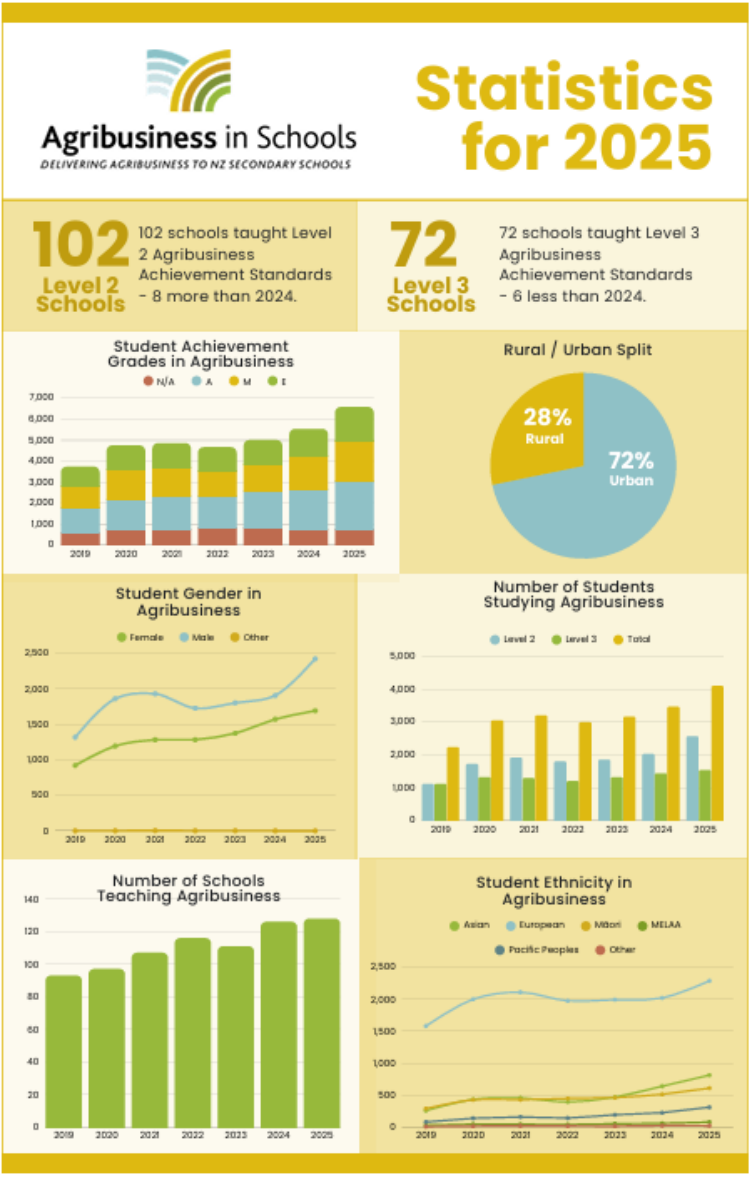
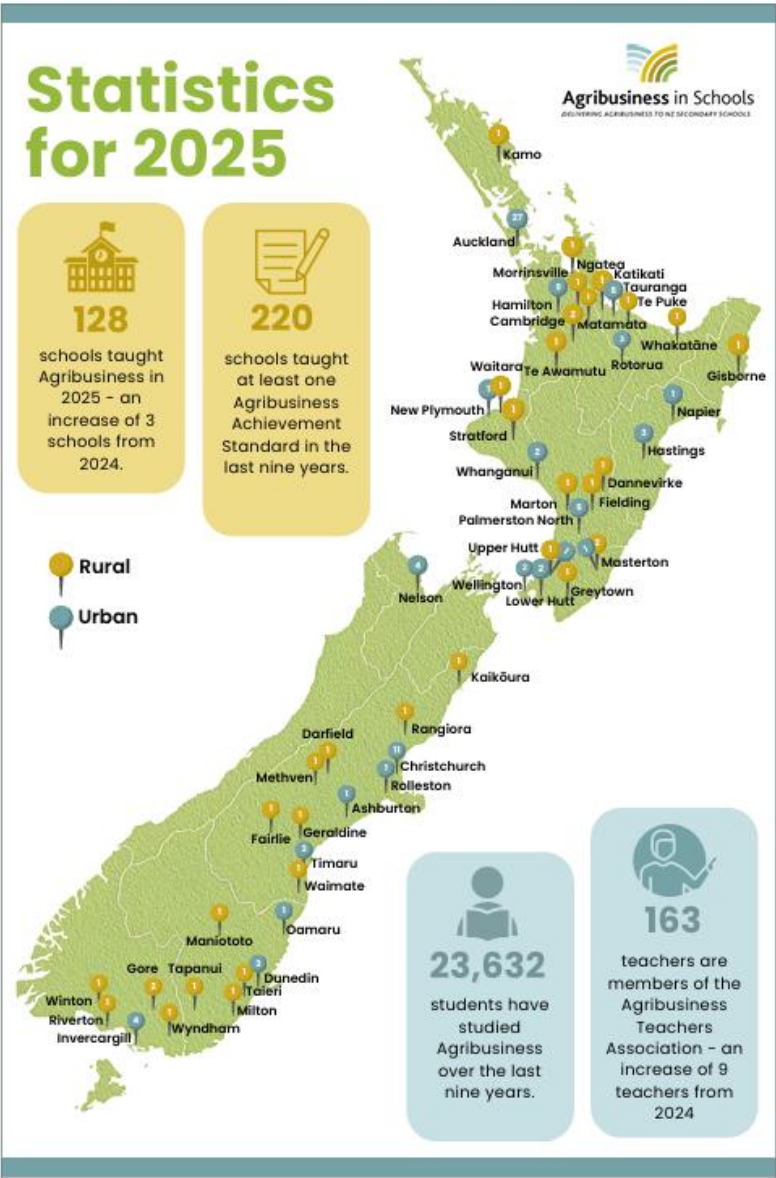
Employees response to 'I think I will be working on a dairy farm in New Zealand in 3 years'



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2025 Agribusiness in Schools Stats



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Questions?

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Ngā mihi nui
Thank you

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