

THE RELEVANCE OF LEADER PERSONALITY IN RELATION TO FARM BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

**Report prepared by Promar International on behalf of AHDB
Dairy**

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i. List of acronyms

EI – Emotional Intelligence – Involves the ability to perceive, accurately appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Meyer & Salovey, 1997).

ESI – Emotional and Social Intelligence – This means the same as Emotional Intelligence but is expanded to include the capacity to effectively negotiate complex social relationships and environments.

ESC – Emotional and Social Competence – This describes an emotional competence as a learned capacity, based on emotional and social intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work. It can be framed as the ability to apply emotional and social intelligence in everyday activity.

EQ – Emotional Quotient – Mathematically, this refers to the result of dividing one number by another. It is used in the context of emotional quotient to indicate the actual scores that are used to define level EQ.

PC – Personal Competence – This consists of the competencies: emotional self-awareness; emotional self-control; accurate self-assessment; conscientiousness; initiative; achievement drive; self-confidence; adaptability; persistence.

SC – Social Competence – This consists of the competencies: understanding others; developing others; leadership; change catalyst; influence; conflict management; teamwork and collaboration; building bonds; communication; organisational awareness; service orientation.

IQR – Interquartile Range – Is a measure of variability, based on dividing a data set into four equal parts. The values that divide each part are called the first, second and third quartiles and they are denoted by Q1, Q2, and Q3, respectively. Q1 is the "middle" value in the *first* half of the rank-ordered data set. Q2 is the [median](#) value in the set. Q3 is the "middle" value in the *second* half of the rank-ordered data set. The range between Q1 and Q3 is the Interquartile Range.

ii. Foreword

“We are disturbed not by things but the views we take of things” – Epictetus¹

How is it that two farmers with basically the same opportunities, assets, land and stock can produce such starkly different results?

Is it because the more successful farmer is more intelligent, has more luck or is it because they have absorbed more technical information and have a better understanding of crop and animal physiology, genetics, soil science, business management and finance?

Perhaps there is something more fundamental about the ways in which different farmers think, act and respond to the people and world around them. AHDB Dairy (formerly DairyCo) recently reported (2013), “There is a range of profit levels among farms of all sizes, which is more a function of management than of size”. The same report found that factors such as ‘business outlook (positive/negative)’ influenced farmer decision making. This strongly implies that feelings expressed in terms of optimism could be an important factor in relation to overall managerial competence. Evidence from other industries has clearly shown a link between how people feel and respond to their emotions and how well their businesses perform (Chernis, 1999).

In 1995, Daniel Goleman (1995) wrote a book called ‘Emotional Intelligence, why it matters more than IQ’. This highlighted the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the workplace and life in general. Since then, it has been increasingly researched and become part of management and leadership development programmes worldwide. It is now almost universally accepted that EI is a very important factor in personal adjustment, success in relationships and in job performance. Despite this widespread interest, hardly any research or work on EI has been conducted with farmers. Instead, effort to improve farm performance continues to focus on the technical aspects of production. Could paying more attention to how farmers manage themselves and others, rather than merely concentrating on improving technical processes, help farmers to lead more productive and satisfying lives?

This quote from Daniel Goleman sets out the importance of emotional intelligence to the leadership role farmers’ play in their businesses:

“Emotional competence is particularly central to leadership, to a role whose essence is getting others to do their jobs more effectively. Interpersonal ineptitude in leaders lowers everyone’s performance: It wastes time, creates acrimony, corrodes motivation and commitment, and builds hostility and apathy. A leader’s strengths or weaknesses in

¹ Greek philosopher – born 55AD, died 135AD

emotional competence can be measured in the gain or loss to the organisation of the fullest talents of those they manage.”

Management is often described as a sequence of tasks. Planning, organising, supervising and directing typify the lexicon used to describe management. But what is missing here is anything that relates to really high performance – you could do all of these tasks but still not perform well. So what are the magic ingredients that high performers possess that enable them to deliver high levels of business performance? That is the question we have tried to answer.

iii. Acknowledgments

Neil Adams of Promar International would like to thank a number of people and organisations who have contributed to this research.

Thanks to AHDB for spotting the potential of this ground breaking research and allowing us to explore the potential for developing emotional and social intelligence competencies. Increasing understanding of the leadership ingredients that drive exceptional performance or, when missing, hold farmers back, offers a novel way to address social and economic challenges faced by farmers and their families.

The research does, hopefully, deliver a valuable contribution to the 'Improving the Welsh Dairy Supply Chain' project that has been made possible through the Supply Chain Efficiencies Scheme (SCES) of the Rural Development Plan (RDP) for Wales 2007-2013. Without the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the project would not have been possible.

None of this work would have been possible without the wisdom and experience of Jim Hanbury of Exeter Leadership Consulting. He is passionate about the difference an improving awareness of knowing ourselves and others can make to leading a more productive and fulfilling life both at work and in our personal lives. His contribution throughout in interviewing farmers, writing about these meetings and shaping this report has been invaluable.

A big thank you to Niall O'Leary, who has been burning the midnight oil trying to complete a PhD, assessing farm management ability and its precursors. We hope his involvement as statistical guru on this project and the subject matter will help him in this mission.

Finally, thank you to all of the farmers who generously gave their time to complete the questionnaire and share with us, frankly and honestly, their own personal experiences.

We hope this work contributes to a better understanding of what makes successful farmers tick and delivers some useful insights to improve management ability. However, we also hope that as we have only just started on this journey of exploring the potential for farmers to develop and use their emotional intelligence as a new source of knowledge, more work can be done to use it to improve farm business performance. The saying goes, 'It's all done with people' and if the human ingredient is ignored then nothing will get done.

iv. Executive summary

Leadership and emotional intelligence

This study is primarily about the process of leadership and leader capabilities within dairy farm businesses and the influence of emotional intelligence on that ability. A farm business leader delivers performance by affecting the behaviour of those around them. In this regard, their own behaviour, moods and attitudes are pivotal. In particular, how the individual uses their self-awareness to positive effect in dealing with other people to create movement, momentum and change that drives positive economic and social outcomes.

Leadership and emotional intelligence are closely related, as emotions play an important part in regulating our actions and the relationships we have with other people. Being emotionally intelligent requires effective awareness, control and management of your own emotions and awareness and understanding of other people. Emotional and social intelligence embraces both of these dimensions and they can be separately assessed and expressed, using proprietary assessment tools, to differentiate an individual's personal competence and social competencies.

Project objectives

In other industries, leadership ability has been positively correlated with components of emotional and social competence (ESC) but surprisingly, little research has been conducted in agriculture around this topic. To address this deficiency the purpose of this study has been to test the hypothesis that farm performance is associated with the level of social and emotional competence of the farm business manager.

To cope with the many difficult challenges farmers face, it is logical that management development programmes should be targeted to bring about the behaviours that lead to sustained success. This meant that the second objective was to determine the implication of assessing and including ESC in future leadership development activity and knowledge transfer in Wales.

Method and results

Emotional and social competence assessments were carried out on 65 dairy farmers based in England and Wales. The ESC competencies evaluated are set out in the table below. The reports of these assessments were compared to assessments of international business managers. In addition, the ESC scores of farmers taking part were compared to farm financial business performance. To explore the interactions and relationships the farmers have in managing their businesses, twenty three of the farmers were also interviewed by a qualified executive leadership coach within a semi-structured interview format.

Table 1: The Components of Emotional and Social Competence

Emotional and social competence				
Personal competence			Social competence	
Self-awareness	Self-regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social skills
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Achievement	Understanding others	Developing others
Accurate self-assessment	Conscientiousness	Drive	Organisational awareness	Leadership
Self confidence	Adaptability	Initiative	Service orientation	Change catalyst
		Persistence		Influence
				Conflict management
				Teamwork and collaboration
				Building bonds
				Communication

In comparison to international business managers, the farmers in the study were significantly lower for the competence of conscientiousness, service orientation, building bonds, understanding others, emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and communication. For the remaining competencies, differences with the international business manager population were not significant, apart from the self-control competence, where farmer scores were on average significantly higher.

Table 2 illustrates the significant differences in the competency score between the group average of low and high performing farms. Two groups split by profit per cow were analysed. The High Profit (HP) group made £739 per cow and consisted of the top 20 farmers in the sample. The Low Profit (LP) group consisted of the bottom performing 20 and made £117 per cow; the average for the whole sample was £366. The groups were also analysed on a pence per litres basis – HP group made 10.2 pence profit per litre compared to the LP group which generated a profit of 1.2 pence per litre. The average profit for all farms in the study was 4.89 pence per litre.

By comparison, the competencies of teamwork and collaboration, conscientiousness, developing others, leadership and persistence were significantly higher in the high performing group than the low performing group of farm. There is a lack of correlation between the remaining ESC competencies and farm performance.

Table 2: Results of two sample Wilcoxon tests between the top and bottom performing group, based on profit per cow

	Top Group Score	Bottom Group Score	Difference	Wilcox P Value £/cow	Wilcox P Value PPL
Teamwork and collaboration	4.6	3.6	1.0	0.03	0.04
Conscientiousness	3.7	2.7	1.0	0.04	0.04
Developing others	4.8	3.8	1.0	0.06	0.04
Leadership	4.6	4.6	0.0	0.07	0.03
Persistence	3.8	3.7	0.1	0.10	0.09

The observations that follow summarise the feedback received during semi-structured interviews with the participating farmers.

Farmers with staff or family teams who have a people oriented personal style, combined with a decisive command role, appeared more likely to run more profitable farms. They tended to be more highly aware of their emotions, strengths and limitations in order to lead high performing teams. High performers attached importance to two-way feedback with staff and partners. They explicitly made the link between involvement, good communication and high performance.

This group were more likely to have trusted advisers whose purpose was to act as a sounding board and they gained support in many different ways, through membership of various groups, off-farm commitments and membership of non-farming related groups.

Higher ESC seems to correlate, again very generally, with the participants taking a longer term perspective of their business plans. Typically, they were clear about their goals over five to 15 years and discussion about business planning often overlapped with the importance to the farmer of succession. Participants with high ESC were clear about delegation and passing responsibility down as far and as fast as possible.

High ESC Farmers were generally more likely to pay attention to their own well-being. Often, this means organising activities they enjoy and are proficient at and delegating the ones they were not good at or disliked. In addition, we noted they were more likely to engage in sport, fitness and non-farming related recreation.

Those with higher ESC also tended to be more optimistic, feel calm before important occasions, were less affected by key events and free from worry. They were also more likely to trust people, see others as reliable and honest and believe what others

say. They were more likely to be tolerant of others mistakes, and better able to express themselves in order to correct poor performance.

The farmers with high ESC had developed them through their upbringing and professional and social experiences. Any lack of great role models on the farm or through their experiences is what appeared to hold back farmers with low ESC.

Developing emotional and social competency

Considerable effort goes into making knowledge and information available to farmers to improve their resilience and sustainability. However, if farmers lack the competencies of motivation, self-awareness, persistence and conscientiousness, it is difficult to see how this effort will be effective.

A clear benefit of the research undertaken, utilising the ESC diagnostic, is that it enables farmers to appreciate their own level of emotional and social competence. From this they are better placed to address any particular weaknesses. The path towards improving ESC is relatively straightforward and consists of increasing self-knowledge of the trainee; the selection of areas to improve; a change plan and finally, development of new habits. Several studies in other sectors provides supportive evidence that an individual can, with appropriate guidance, improve their ESC.

In future, a research project aimed at farmers could examine the effect of how training to improve EFC could provide useful and practical evidence that these skills can usefully be improved for the long-term benefit of the industry.

Conclusion

Lack of interpersonal sensitivity, personal flexibility and emotional resilience have tremendous capacity today to arrest the career prospects of intelligent, qualified and technically proficient professional farmers. Being able to carry out farm work and farm management tasks, being able to get the hub of the issue in a logical and insightful manner, demonstrating excellent project management skills and being task-driven counts for little if the individual is a source of friction in the team, has difficulty dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty and is emotionally ill-equipped to handle stress and criticism.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence on the relevance of emotional and social competencies (ESC), for improving management and leadership skills on UK dairy farms. Our understanding of personality is helpful in describing how people behave in different situations. We can use our knowledge of personality to measure ESC and to consider it alongside other factors impacting on business performance such as aptitude, attitude, experience, opportunity and job demands. This will enable us to make a judgment as to whether ESC is or can be a significant factor in overall business performance on farms. The research has focussed on Welsh dairy farms but the learning is likely to be as relevant to all leaders of all types of farming businesses across all sectors.

Today, the farmer is faced with many difficult challenges: changing agricultural policy, the increasing pressure and demands from the market, including increased volatility, and increased demands from within his own farm, as operating scale increases. In the past, it was probably possible to manage and control a farm with a mixture of experience and common sense. The question is whether this will be sufficient in the future and which competencies need to be developed to cope with the new challenges.

In the past, management development programmes targeted towards dairy farmers have tended to have a technical skills focus, rather than attempting to explore the drives and motivations that bring about the behaviours that lead to sustained success. Rather than attempting to invent and describe a whole new set of competencies aimed squarely at dairy farmers, it makes more sense to look at what is common practice in other sectors and see if these can be applied in a farming setting.

Leadership ability in other sectors has been positively correlated with components of emotional and social competence. Unpublished research conducted by Promar in 2012¹ found high levels of correlation between business performance on dairy farms and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the people who lead them. Surprisingly, little research has been conducted in agriculture around the importance of leadership and how this impacts on farm performance. A greater understanding of how it can be influenced should help to guide knowledge transfer and management development activity in the future.

¹ In collaboration with the University of Reading, a survey of 81 farmers covering topics such as farm management practices, personal motivations and attitudes were used to predict financial performance. The work is currently being incorporated into a PhD thesis and may be published in the future.

1.2 Objectives

The research in this report has been designed to determine the relevance and practical issues arising from the use of ESC to improve leadership and subsequent farm performance. Attention has been paid to the practical use of assessment tools and how these can be utilised within development programmes to deliver measurable improvements in leadership competence on farms and subsequently on business performance.

In summary therefore, this study aimed to assess the levels of Emotional and Social Competence (ESC), to identify a set of capabilities, desirable characteristics or skills that would make a positive difference to farmers in Wales. In response to the objectives of the study, two research questions are proposed:

1. To test the hypothesis that farm performance is associated with the level of social and emotional competence of the farm manager
2. To determine the implications of assessing and including ESC in future leadership development activity and knowledge transfer in Wales.

2. Methodology

2.2 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 65 dairy farmers based in England and Wales. Complete datasets of both financial ESC reports were collected for 61 participants. Many of the target group were chosen as we were able to access financial information on the performance of these businesses. Over 180 farmers were invited to take part in the study but the period of research clashed with silage making, which meant it was difficult to persuade them to divert their attention to giving up time to complete the questionnaire. The final sample does not give a balanced representation by size of farm or farm system, however, the farmers that took part were representative of the performance differences found across Welsh and English farms. Small farms, those with less than 100 cows, are underrepresented in the sample.

2.3 Research instrument

The Emotional and Social Competence Report used in this study with farmers, is generated from the Occupational Personality Questionnaire TM (OPQ32) which is a broad personality inventory from CEB SHL (Saville et al., 1996). It is a widely respected tool that passes all the British Psychological Society (BPS) testing and licensing standards and which has been used by thousands of businesses across the world. OPQ is designed for use by practitioners to use in occupational contexts and does not incorporate any specific theories but rather is comprised of a eclectic mix of prominent academic models from the relevant disciplines of psychology and management. Starting in 1981, the OPQ was created by a large team of psychologists and has been improving regularly following some early critique. Later glowing endorsements followed these improvements and substantial testing of the instruments properties (Smith and Banerji, 2007). Various reports are available from the OPQ including emotional and social intelligence reports.

The assessment takes between 25 and 45 minutes to complete. Technically, the questionnaire is considered to be an Ipsative test (one specifically designed to measure within person differences, where they are forced to choose one preference as being stronger than another, within themselves). Ipsative scores are not 'how much of this preference do you possess?' but rather 'how much of this preference do you have in relation to your levels of other preferences you possess?'

Several farmers complained about the repetitive nature of the questions and the time it took to complete it. These comments are typical of respondents completing this type of assessment for the first time and were not unexpected. Only one farmer who started to complete the questionnaire gave up part way through. The use of a computer interface and spam filters on email also caused issues with delivering the

questionnaire electronically to farmers and once received, for them to complete it. This was mostly caused by web browser incompatibility with the online questionnaire.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

The second part of the research consisted of face to face interviews with a qualified executive leadership coach, which lasted between 1½ and 3 hours. The farmers interviewed were asked similar questions within a semi-structured interview format and invited to comment on their personal ESC report. Confidential notes of these meetings were taken for subsequent analysis.

The interview themes were merely intended as a loose direction for this interview and were specifically designed to encourage a discussion around the interactions and relationships the participants have in managing their businesses and how they go about 'handling' themselves and influencing others in this context. Each of these farmers live and work within a series of professional and personal social networks. This interview aimed to further explore, in the light of the profiles generated as a result of them completing the OPQ32, their place in these networks and the importance they attach to them, maintaining and growing them, how do they use their networks for the benefit of their business? Are they aware of the skill sets which they employ in doing so? In particular the discussions explored the quality of the relationships and interactions around these individuals and the extent to which they influenced the quality of the relationships and thereby influenced the behaviour of the people around them in a way which created better business performance.

Two forms of statistical analysis were performed to assess differences between farmers and the general manager population and between farmer groups selected by performance.

1. Comparison of dairy farmers to managers in general

The ESI reports provided Standardised Ten (STEN) scores for each of the participants. These STEN scores are standardised against a large sample of managers so that a score of 5 would indicate the participant matched the average score for the general manager population. To assess if the farmer population differed from the broader manager population on any of the variables, one sample t-test were performed to see if the farmer population scores differed significantly from 5.

2. Relating to the top and bottom farms

Two sample tests were also performed on variables comparing the top 20 and bottom 20 farmers for profit per cow and profit per litre. The Wilcoxon signed rank test was performed on variables that were significantly different and remained significant with this non-parametric test. Correlation analysis was also performed to see if other

relationships could be discerned beyond that found in the two sample tests but no more were found. Only Wilcoxon test statistics are reported for succinctness. Throughout the report, case studies presenting the material from interviewees are used to illustrate key differences and similarities in experiences. This material is presented anonymously, with identifying characteristics removed or disguised. Quotations are used to illustrate our findings, and where these are presented they are representative of a theme or viewpoint that characterised the research.

Our definition of profit used in this study includes all farm returns and farm costs but excludes non-farming income, rent and finance charges. An allowance has been made for family labour based on the assumption that a family labour unit equates to an input of 2,080 hours per annum at a rate of £10.48 per hour. In summary, therefore, the figure used consistently in this report is farming profit before rent and finance but after an allowance for family labour input.

2.5 Limitations of this research

Firstly, it is based on the results of a self-response questionnaire, ie what did the respondent think at the moment they answered the questions, about themselves. The ESC report was designed to summarise how candidates preferred style or a typical way of behaving is likely to have influenced the extent to which they may or may not have developed a range of social and emotional competencies. Due consideration must be given to the subjective nature of questionnaire-based ratings in interpreting the data. The format of the OPQ32 required the candidate to make choices between a range of different statements. It is important to appreciate that, due to the nature of the questionnaire it is not possible to achieve a high potential rating for all competencies. The profile is, therefore, best viewed as indicating their likely relative strengths and limitations across the competencies considered. This has implications for detecting differences between high and low performing groups, as the scores are not objective measures of ability but relative personal preferences.

The competencies are inferences only. They are not definitive measures of actual social and emotional competence. They are merely intended to provide the participants with an indication of the degree to which their particular combination of personality traits might be predictive of a range of social and emotional competencies.

Since actual social and emotional competence is determined by many factors other than personality (eg aptitude, attitude, experience, opportunity and job demands) it is unusual to find a perfect match between personality and social and emotional competencies. The candidate may, for instance, have developed a particular competency well ahead of what would be predicted from their personality alone.

3. Leadership and emotional intelligence

This study is ostensibly about the process of leadership and leader capabilities within dairy farm businesses and the influence of emotional intelligence on that ability. Before we consider the research we have conducted, this section provides a background of what leadership and emotional intelligence actually means and how they are related.

3.1 What is leadership

There are a great many definitions of leadership. Below, we have set out three we agree with. They are all relevant to this study because we are interested in the relationships and the range of contacts, social networks and connections engaged in discussions and activities involved with the farm business. In particular, how those in leadership roles, typically the farm business owner, impact on the behaviour of those around them. A key aspect of this is how the individual uses their self-awareness to positive effect in dealing with other people. Effective leaders create movement, momentum and change as a result of the relationships and positive social capital they create.

Three definitions of leadership:

Leadership is a process that involves setting a purpose and a direction which inspires people to combine and work towards willingly; paying attention to the means, pace, quality and progress towards the aim; and upholding group unity and individual effectiveness throughout. (Scoullier, 2011).

Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members... Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership. (Bass, 1990.)

Leadership is that process in which one person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons and gets them to move along together with him or her and with each other in that direction with competence and full commitment. (Jaques & Clement, 1994: 4)

These definitions have in common the themes that leadership is involved with influencing people, including ourselves, to move in a direction towards a goal. As a leader, this movement involves motivating and addressing the behaviour of ourselves as well as other people and is therefore concerned with motivation of self and others. Relationships are, therefore, in the context of leadership, central to the achievement

of goals. Emotional Intelligence is also about the relationships we have with others and the quality of the interactions we have with them.

Clearly, this study touches upon 'leadership' in the context of modern dairy farm enterprises. As leadership is a widely contested term, it is important to set out that this paper is embedded in the widely accepted perspective of leadership as a social and relational phenomena, strongly linked to the process of (staff) engagement without diminishing the value, validity and potential usefulness of any other perspectives. Leadership, seen like this then, is neither a single event nor even a series of bounded events involving one person, which means that factors affecting farm profitability are many and varied and immensely more complicated than merely looking at ESC in farm owners and key managers. However, the earliest indications are that ESC has, nevertheless, a very important role to play in assisting farm managers and owners to run their enterprises and businesses as efficiently and profitably as possible. Style of leadership is a very close relative to emotional and social competence. We must then conclude this report with a brief discussion on the implications for the future leadership development opportunities arising from an enhanced awareness of the importance of ESC. There are two areas which should be looked at – firstly, the type of connections, interactions and relationships which farmers should pay attention to and secondly, the skill set of competencies they develop and apply in making those relationships as high quality as possible to positively impact on their businesses.

All of us can choose to respond rather than react to situations in our life and work. This report and our research, is about what happens when you combine an understanding of emotional intelligence and how this influences performance in farming businesses. Emotions play an important part in regulating our actions and when you replace the word actions with performance, it is clear to see how the two are closely related.

3.2 Defining emotional intelligence

There has been massive interest in Emotional Intelligence since Daniel Goleman wrote, *Emotional Intelligence, why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 1995). He argued in his book that Emotional Intelligence (EI) was the most important factor in personal adjustment, success in relationships and in job performance. The premise of the book is that it takes more to be successful than having a high IQ. Various definitions of EI are set out below:

Being emotionally intelligent involves tuning into emotions, understanding them and taking appropriate action (Orme, 2001).

The habitual practice of: using emotional information from ourselves and other people; integrating this with our thinking and using these thoughts to inform our decision

making to help us get what we want from the immediate situation and life in general (Sparrow and Knight 2006).

The capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman 1998) (p. 317).

The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer and Salovey 1990).

These definitions can be paraphrased to; 'people who have EI are able to identify feelings, show feelings, manage feelings and use them in a productive way'.

3.3 Emotional intelligence and job performance

Several researchers indicated that EI competency had positive effects on an organisation. For example, Cherniss (2001) pointed out that EI was an essential part of most organisations, as it was used as a tool in the recruitment process, as well as in practical training for individuals and groups. Similarly, according to the study of Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts (2004), EI skills might be a vital component of any organisation's management.

Goleman (1998) stated that people who had high EI levels were more able to connect with people in a way that gained the person's interest. This meant they had a greater chance of successfully achieving their goals. Mayer and Salovey (1997) explained that EI helped with the social skills that were needed to perform alongside others in a team environment. Managers with high EI levels were also thought to be able to manage their workforce more effectively, while achieving more employee loyalty, resulting in more commitment to the firm from their subordinates (Cherniss, 2001). A very thorough review of the EI literature (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000) demonstrates clearly that EI impacts on work success.

It is argued that EI is the host for a wide range of critical skills such as time management, decision making and communication skills, assertiveness, customer service, team building and understanding others to name a few. A little effort spent trying to increase ESC can have a wide ranging positive impact on an individual's performance and satisfaction with life.

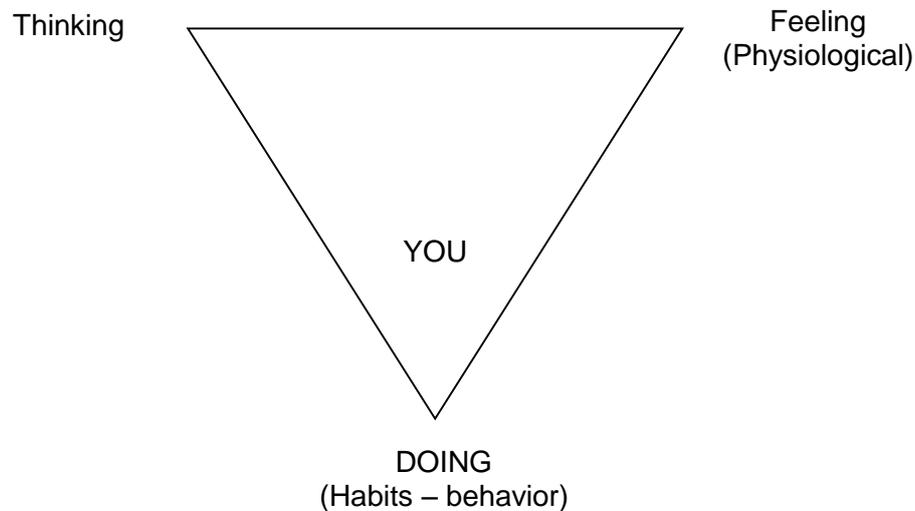
3.4 A brief description of emotional intelligence

In an evolutionary sense our emotional (feeling brain) is older and more dominant than our thinking brain and exerts more influence on it than we are necessarily aware of. It is wired up for letting our emotions rule mostly as a survival instinct. This means

our actions and performance are influenced more by our ancient emotional brain than perhaps we care to admit. Harmful action from our feeling brain easily overwhelms our thinking brain and explains why some habits are hard to give up like smoking, drinking or overeating.

Everything we do involves the experiential triangle (Figure 1) of thoughts, emotions and actions. We are always thinking, feeling and doing and these three things are always connected. Our feelings are the physical sensations or emotions that direct our actions. We always have them and they are just as natural as breathing.

Figure 1: Triangle of thoughts, emotions and feelings



We have feelings about a stimulus (for example, an invitation to a farm walk arrives), you respond to this through your emotional brain (for example, it might trigger a fearful response – irritation and frustration because you cannot possibly see how you might make the time to attend as you are stuck on a treadmill of long hours and hardly any time off) and before you have had a chance even to analyse and interpret what the letter is saying about the time and place of the event, you have subconsciously decided you cannot possibly attend. What has happened here is the emotional brain has eclipsed the rational one.

As we can see from this example, attitudes play a vital role in the thought/feeling triangle of events. The farmers attitude to the event is automatically to place it below work on the farm without stopping to fully evaluate the benefit and value that the event might have or if the work on the farm, in several weeks' time, might be less pressured or could be organised in a different way. How we respond in tough situations is critical. There are plenty of them on a farm but whether you explode or go under, or cope and take things in your stride will make the difference between success and failure.

It is argued, that being successful requires effective awareness, control and management of your own emotions, and awareness and understanding of other people. EI embraces both of these dimensions (1): Understanding yourself, measured as Personal Competence and (2): Understanding others and their feelings which is referred to as social intelligence and measured as Social Competence.

Understanding yourself is really about picking up on your own feelings and doing something about them. You might be feeling motivated and energetic because the

bulk tank has never been so full or perhaps feeling more negative emotions, even anger, about something that has gone wrong.

Example Scenario:

One of the farmers in the study told us he frequently had an anger problem with his staff when they didn't show initiative. He hated himself for doing this but felt trapped, because on the one hand he wanted things to improve but he lacked the self-awareness to see that it was his behaviour that was preventing the change he wanted to see, rather than the behaviour of the staff. When he was asked to think about this, he realised that his angry behaviours had made his staff fearful of making suggestions or showing initiative. Clearly the problem was not going to resolve itself by being angry.

Here is what he could have done to improve the situation. Pause before getting angry and then ask himself what emotions he was feeling and why. Next take control of those emotions by using his logical thinking brain and improve his actions. By explaining to the staff calmly the impact that any lack of initiative was having and supporting them to modify their behaviour in a way that they could be comfortable with he would feel better about himself. This might seem really simple and obvious but when your automatic primal response is to shout and get angry, changing the behaviour is often very hard.

Goleman (1995) developed the EI framework based on the belief that an individual could reach their highest potential by developing skills in five competencies including: (1) self-awareness (2) self-regulation (3) motivation (4) empathy (5) social skills. These five main competencies are divided into subsets that give twenty competencies overall. They are set out in Table 3 below and a detailed explanation of what feelings and behaviour they describe is provided in Appendix 1.

Table 3: The components of emotional and social competence

Emotional and social competence				
Personal competence			Social competence	
Self-awareness	Self-regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social skills
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Achievement	Understanding others	Developing others
Accurate self-assessment	Conscientiousness	Drive	Organisational awareness	Leadership
Self confidence	Adaptability	Initiative	Service orientation	Change catalyst
		Persistence		Influence
				Conflict management
				Teamwork and collaboration
				Building bonds
				Communication

Looking at the table above the five core emotional and social competencies pair up under two main headings; Personal Competence (PC) and Social Competence (SC). Personal competence is about the ability to be aware of your emotions and manage your behaviour and tendencies. Social competence is made up of your ability to appreciate other people's feelings and act to improve the quality of the relationship.

No one is likely to be excellent in all of these competencies; we inevitably have a profile of strengths and weaknesses. Outstanding performance may only require strengths in six or seven competencies spread across all five areas of emotional intelligence.

4. Results

4.1 EI Competencies in the research sample

A core objective of this study is to test the hypothesis that farm performance is associated with the level of social and emotional competence of the farm manager. The basic structure of the research we conducted to test this hypothesis was set out in the previous section.

What follows is an analysis of the distribution of competencies in the study sample and this is followed by a comparison of their scores against managers in other international businesses. To test the hypothesis described above, the ESC scores have been compared to the financial performance of the businesses participating in the study. The analysis variables of profit per litre and profit per cow have been used in the correlations ESC competencies and farm financial performance.

4.2 Competency assessment

EI is not one thing. It cannot be summed up in one figure like IQ, as it is made up of a mixture of attitudes, feelings and thoughts and the actions (performance) that result from them. However, the various competencies can be measured and that has been carried out in this study using the OPQ/SHL ESC report. The results of an assessment are presented using scales set out below in Table 4.

Table 4: Scores and descriptors used to assess ESC

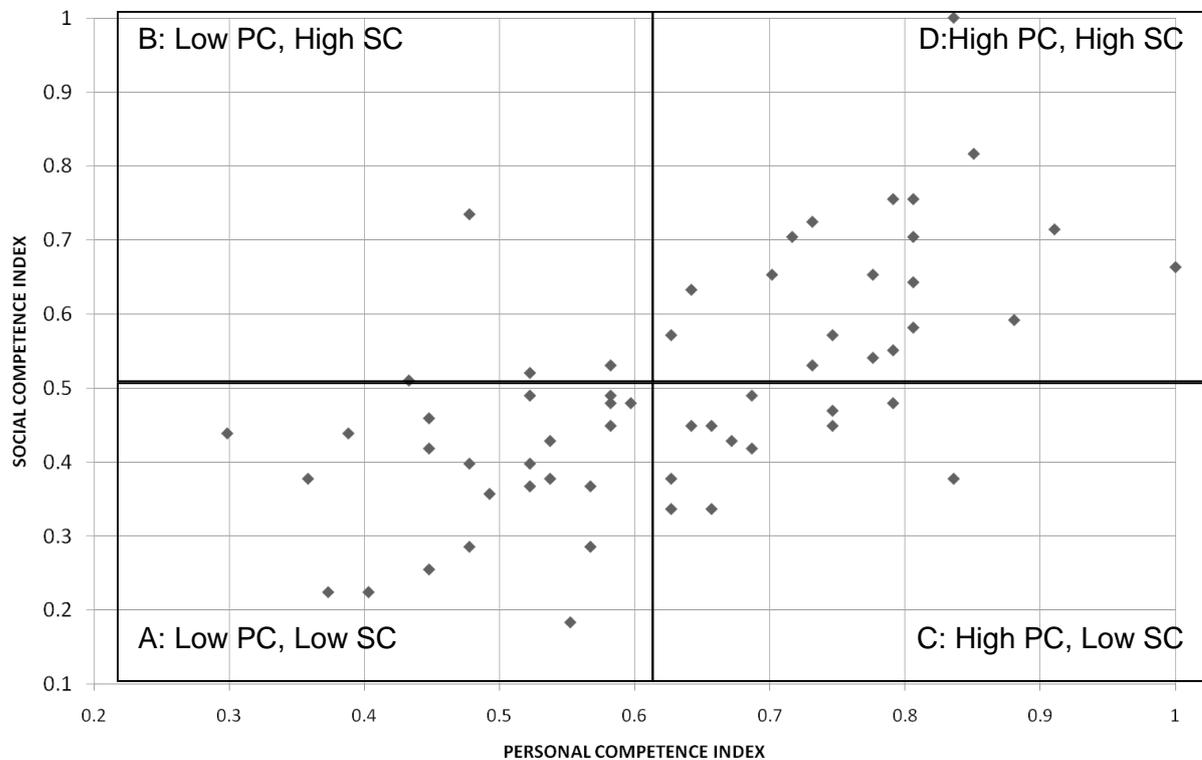
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Competence descriptor	Unlikely		Less likely		Average		Quite likely		Very likely	

4.3 Distribution of scores

As expected for this type of social science research, the scores for the participants showed a high level of variance. Data on ESC competence for each of the participants were indexed by reference to the individual with the highest overall Personal Competence (PC) who had a total score of 67. This score is represented by 1.0 on the X axis in Figure 2. On the Y axis, scores have been indexed against the individual with the highest score, a total of 98, for Social Competence (SC). These scores are the sum of the individual competency scores as described in Table 4.

The median score for PC was 42 and for SC 47 which is broadly represented by the lines that intersect in Figure 2 at 0.6 on the X axis and 0.5 on the Y axis.

Figure 2: Indexed Distribution of ESC Personal Competence (PC) and Social Competence (SC) scores



Those farmers in box A situated close to the intersection of the X and Y axis have both low PC and SC scores. This group is likely to be least able to utilise the ESC competencies in comparison to other farmers taking part in the study.

Only one farmer has an appreciably high Social Competence score and low Personal Competence score, shown in box B in Figure 2. An explanation of this occurrence is that it is highly unlikely that someone will be proficient in utilising social competencies unless they have developed personal competencies (see section 3.3 for further explanation).

A higher proportion of farmers are distributed in box C. They have relatively high levels of Personal Competence but lower levels of Social Competence. People in this category are likely to possess the personal competencies to be successful but may struggle relating to others. The phenomenon of high PC and low SC is described in more detail in section 5.1.

Farmers in Box D have higher levels of Personal Competence and Social Competence. Those situated in the top right corner of the box are likely to have a high

proportion of their competencies described as quite likely or very likely (see Table 4). They are typically high performing, ambitious, leading successful businesses and enjoying personal satisfaction.

Farmers in box A have PC and SC scores lower than other study participants. These farmers are unlikely or less likely to make use of any of the ESC competencies.

4.4 Farmers compared to international business managers

Data on the farmer competency scores were compared to business managers from around the globe across a wide range of industries and occupations. The mean score for the manager population is indexed to 5. The mean score for farmers is shown in column 2 of Table 5. The results show that for 17 of the 20 competencies tested, farmers had a lower score than the business manager comparison group, although only seven of these differences were statistically significant. Three of the competencies were higher for the farmer group, although only Self Control was statistically significant.

Farmer scores were significantly different ($p < 0.05$) for the competencies Conscientiousness, Service orientation, Self-control, Building bonds, Understanding others, Emotional awareness, Accurate self-assessment and Communication. With the exception of Self-control the farmer score for these competencies was lower than the general manager population.

The table also illustrates the range in scores with interquartile³ ranges (IQR) given for each competence. These ranges illustrate that farmers were distributed from being unlikely and very likely to possess individual competencies. One quarter of farmers have scores below the interquartile range, with a further quarter having scores above the interquartile range. For example, 25% of scores for conscientiousness will be below two or categorised as unlikely. Conversely, 25% of scores will be above five or categorised as quite likely. For this competence the farmers in the sample were on average 1.65 score points below the international business manager sample.

³ See List of Acronyms for explanation of IQR.

Table 5: Score means of sampled farmers compared to the population of international business managers (mean 5)

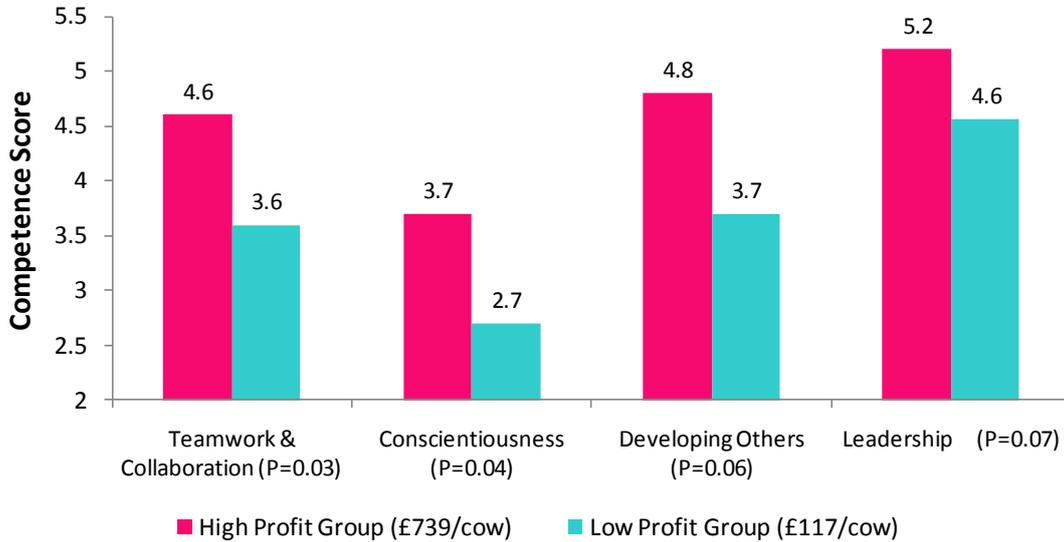
	Mean score	Range min	Range max	Inter-quartile range	Wilcox P value*
Conscientiousness (PC)	3.35	1.00	8.00	2-5	<0.001
Service orientation (SC)	3.75	1.00	8.00	2-5	<0.001
Self-control (PC)	6.18	2.00	10.00	5-8	<0.001
Building bonds (SC)	3.91	1.00	9.00	3-6	<0.001
Understanding others (SC)	4.26	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.010
Emotional awareness (PC)	4.32	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.03
Accurate self-assessment (PC)	4.42	1.00	8.00	3-5	0.06
Communication (SC)	4.35	1.00	9.00	3-6	0.05
Organisational awareness (SC)	4.49	1.00	9.00	3-6	0.08
Teamwork and collaboration (SC)	4.54	3.00	6.00	3-5	0.10
Developing others (SC)	4.54	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.09
Achievement drive (PC)	4.60	1.00	8.00	3-6	0.08
Influence (SC)	4.60	1.00	9.00	3-6	0.36
Change catalyst (SC)	4.58	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.12
Adaptability (PC)	5.39	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.17
Persistence (PC)	4.61	1.00	10.00	3-6	0.202
Leadership (SC)	4.70	1.00	9.00	3-6	0.293
Initiative (SC)	4.81	1.00	9.00	3-6	0.483
Conflict management (SC)	5.11	2.00	9.00	3-6	0.635
Self-confidence (PC)	4.93	1.00	9.00	4-6	0.778

*This test assessed the likelihood that the sample had means different from 5

4.5 Relationship between competencies and farm performance

Figure 3 below illustrates the difference in competency score between the group average of low and high performing farms. All of the differences in this chart are significant.

Figure 3: Results high vs. low performing farms



- Two groups split by profit per cow – High Profit (HP) group who made £739, consisted of the top 20 farmers in the sample and Low Profit (LP) group (profit of £117) consisted of the bottom performing 20. Average for the whole sample was £366
- Groups were also analysed on a pence per litres basis – HP group made 10.2 pence per litre, LP group 1.2 pence, average was 4.89 ppl

Table 6: Results of two sample Wilcoxon test between the top and bottom performing group, based on profit per cow*

	Top Group Score	Bottom Group score	Difference	Wilcoxon P Value £/cow	Wilcoxon P Value PPL
Teamwork and collaboration	4.6	3.6	1.0	0.03	0.04
Conscientiousness	3.7	2.7	1.0	0.04	0.04
Developing others	4.8	3.8	1.0	0.06	0.04
Leadership	4.6	4.6	0.0	0.07	0.03
Persistence	3.8	3.7	0.1	0.10	0.09

*Wilcoxon test correlation also shown for pence per litre comparison

The same competencies were statistically significant when the comparisons were compared on a per cow and a per litre basis.

Further analysis was conducted based on the volume of litres produced on each farm but no statistically significant results were determined comparing the highest and lowest producing farms.

4.6 Conclusions

The competencies: Teamwork and collaboration, Conscientiousness, Developing others; Leadership and Persistence are significantly higher in the high performing group than the low performing group of farms. Appendix 1 gives a detailed description for each of these competencies and describes the behaviours of individuals with high and low competency levels. Teamwork, leadership and developing others are social competencies relating to getting the most from people and adopting a strategic approach to the management of the business. The competencies of conscientiousness and persistence are about being organised, planning and possessing energy and drive along with the ability to stick at the job even when things get tough. All of these characteristics were highly evident in the high performing farm leaders interviewed in the course of this study.

There is a lack of correlation between the remaining ESC competencies and farm performance. This could be attributed to the OPQ/ESC instrument being ill designed to compare across people, small sample size and/or overestimating the effect of ESC in a farming context. Overestimation could be as a result of there being other decision makers and leaders in the business, who were not evaluated and whose own competencies complement or make up for any deficiencies found in the farmers that were evaluated. It is also possible that cognitive skills or intellect plays a more important part in the level of performance. However, this research did not seek to evaluate this relationship.

Certain competencies would not be expected to be as important to farmers. For example, people in sales require high levels of competency in customer care (service orientation), building bonds (networking) and influence (being persuasive). None of these competencies are likely to be as important to a farmer, albeit notwithstanding that a farmer could benefit from increased competency in all areas. It is just that in some occupations some competencies are more relevant than others towards performing the job to a high level of proficiency.

To some extent, the sample was self-selecting, in that it was only possible to recruit people to take part who were willing to complete the questionnaire. No record was kept of reasons cited for not wanting to take part in the research but they can be classified as follows:

- The most common reason for refusing to take part was workload with “too busy” or “a lot on right now” as typical responses
- 16 farmers said they would participate in the research and were sent copies of the questionnaire or invited to complete it online but failed to subsequently do so.

Inevitably the participants of the research are those willing to participate but it would be pure speculation to try to estimate the impact this has on the results. It is feasible that individuals who willingly take part in ESC research are more likely to have higher EI than those that don't but we have no way to test such an assertion.

5. Feedback from semi-structured interviews with farmers

5.1 Background to semi-structured interviews

The research included an interviewer as part of the qualitative part of the project. It included some reflective writing and reactions to the process of meeting and interviewing these individual farmers as a means of exploring the importance and relevance of emotional and social competence (ESC). The interviewer was Jim Hanbury and from time to time he comments on his own interaction with the participants. It seems important to do this as we are talking about emotional intelligence and therefore a purely cognitive discussion based on quantitative analysis of report data alone would be incongruent with the subject area. It is worth noting in the interests of the quality of research that Jim has many years' experience in working with and talking to farmers at all levels from key opinion formers to ordinary non-political farmers. He also has considerable experience working with senior business leaders as an executive coach in many other sectors and a forerunner in leadership development. The direct quotes from participants that James noted provides an enlighten perspective on how ESC manifests in farm management and how focusing on it even briefly lead to significant realisations for participants.

Measuring the participants' ESC and then guiding them through a semi-structured interview process helped the interviewer to get a sense of the tone that these individual business owners set within and around their business. This tone was mainly impacted by the extent to which they are aware of their own emotions and the impact that they had on the people around them through their behaviours and the ripple effect in 'the team' from their own behaviours. It enabled a picture to be painted of the sort of permissions generally given to people working in the business and the norms and culture around how people operate and behave with each other. How open are people to having open and frank conversations with each other with useful feedback and to what extent did they foster a climate of trust.

5.2 Setting the tone

During the interviews we were really exploring the question "What is it like to work around here?" Research has proven that in fact, as a rule, nice guys finish first and run more successful operations than those who are too harsh with others (Goleman 1998). Farmers with staff or family teams who have a people-orientated personal style combined with a decisive command role are likely to run more profitable farms on this basis. What we noticed in the interviews was that there was an association between those who were engaging, receptive to the interviewer, pleasant to deal with, put the interviewer at ease rather than the other way round and a positive score for ESC as shown by the evaluation. In discussion and during the interviews those who scored highly for ESC appeared to be more people orientated, positive and outgoing. They

were more emotionally expressive and had a wider range in expressing themselves. They were typically more democratic and involving and more trusting of others.

Those with lower ESC scores in the ESC report were typically less obviously welcoming of the interviewer. They were not so aware of the helpfulness of ensuring the interview took place in a private place, took interruptions, and did not offer a cup of tea or coffee to the visitor. These are small issues on the surface but they also correlated, generally, with a lower ESC score. On further discussion, these participants were also harsher and more disapproving when talking about and referring to their own staff, they tended to react angrily to bad news and instead of delegating to the lowest level would typically step in and micromanage the situation.

Farmers with high ESC appeared to have a range of tools at their disposal to help them set the tone and manage higher performing staff and teams. Those with the highest ESC, almost without exception, articulated in some way or other the importance they attached to two-way feedback with their staff or partners. While they may not have articulated it in these words, they wanted a positive climate where it was easy to engage, meet and talk in an atmosphere of trust. Most had some practiced method around meeting staff. The interviewer was surprised by the number of high ESC scoring farmers who held some form of regular staff meeting or briefing. Sometimes daily, sometimes monthly – usually relatively informal but still used to discuss what had gone well, badly and needed to improve. These are the sort of practices you would expect to find in any high performing team in any sector. These high ESC farmers explicitly made the link between involvement, good communication and high performance. The interviewer also heard several examples of the farmer organising downtime events off the farm, where staff and their families could socialise and relate to each other in another way outside work – variously pub meals, farm visits, shooting and go-carting were mentioned.

In particular, what was notable amongst the very profitable and successful farmers who also scored highly for ESC is that they universally recognised the ‘sea change in the industry in terms of professionalisation’. They were aware they were at the front of the curve of that change and were modelling the behaviours needed on larger scale units. In many cases they had self-developed these skills or used opportunities presented to them through off farm activities to build social competencies which they then used to great effect in the business.

- “We are proud of our reputation and protect it”
- “We want everyone working here to have a positive sense of self-worth, we take an interest in everyone and help them develop their strengths as we get to know them”.

5.3 Positive networks

All the farmers interviewed were asked about the presence of trusted advisers within their social network. It was apparent time after time that those farmers presenting with higher levels of either emotional or social competence or both were more likely to have one or more trusted advisers whose purpose was as a sounding board to talk things through as much as for specific advice on particular technical areas. They also gained support in other ways. Several spoke of various groups that they belonged to such as grassland discussion groups and other obvious contenders for farmer membership such as the local NFU group. The highest performers appeared to have more numerous off-farm and non-farm commitments, as well as their business duties. Many discussed membership of non-farming related groups that they belonged to, eg sports, charity and other types. It was clear that in a remote working sector such as dairy farming that those with these 'other' relationships took a great deal of benefit from the interaction, generally in terms of their own personal wellbeing and more specifically in using these relationships in supporting and helping them to think through problems. Encouraging knowledge transfer activity within social networks like discussion groups is therefore in itself, a positive way to develop this competence.

Those with lower levels of ESC may still have had a trusted adviser but they seemed more likely to stick to their brief, for instance, calculating rations or doing monthly budgets and benchmark analysis against KPIs. So higher ESC seemed to correlate very approximately with the participant having a range of relationships often not particularly connected with the farming world or his specific business but which were helpful to him as a means of making sense of things and decision making. There appeared also to be a trend towards having more advisers specialising in key areas where technical advice was concerned.

- “When I get off the farm and meet with my friends it often helps to put things in perspective and helps me clarify what I do next”
- “Getting away from the farm and mixing with others helps to clear the fog”.

Other social networks cited included a regular reference to the need to maintain good relationships with customers and suppliers. Farmers were very aware of the milk buyer in particular and this was a clear change to what the interviewer might have expected a decade ago. While the social competence of *service orientation* was generally lower than might be expected or seen in other sectors, it was generally higher with those farmers who were recipients of a favourable milk price (probably Tesco, Waitrose or other supermarket) and also with those farmers with other business interests who saw their farm enterprise as part of their business portfolio.

5.4 Business planning timescale

Higher ESC seems to correlate, again very generally, with the participants taking a longer term perspective on their business plans. They were clear about their goals over five and possibly 15 years and discussion about business planning often overlapped with the importance to the farmer of succession. Those farmers interviewed with the highest levels of ESC generally appeared to have a clearer idea of their goals. They talked without prompting more easily about wanting to be “doing less on farm in five years”. Those with higher levels of ESC spoke about business planning as more of a collaborative activity:

- “Our strategic planning horizon is at least 15 years”
- “We have a committee of three – son, wife and me”
- “We sit down regularly to discuss the whole direction of the farm – I like my whole family to be involved in making these decisions”.

Where there was evidence of this involvement of family members, it appeared to have a positive effect in that it maximised the strengths of all family members and improved the quality of decision making.

5.5 Succession and family issues

There was some evidence (anecdotal only) that where the participant was a son with father still active, the ESC appeared higher where the succession plans and planning were implemented earlier and were clear for all to understand. Father hanging onto decision making capability (ie the chequebook signatory) was likely to hold back the personal and professional development of the succeeding generation, particularly in terms of leadership capability and the skills of managing others involved in the business. Conversely participants with the highest levels of ESC were clear about delegation and passing responsibility down as far and as fast as possible. This means that the timing and way in which the next generation is brought into the business is important in terms of developing the full range of competencies needed to run a farming business. The earlier they have real responsibility in their career the more likely they are to be able to develop the ESC they need through the experiences of running the business. It also means they are better able to build and develop their own social networks over time which they need to be as effective as possible rather than just inheriting a parent’s network.

Where the ESC was lowest there was some anecdotal evidence of conflict or dysfunction and breakdown in the family unit or at best poor communication skills. It is impossible to draw specific conclusions on this but it did appear that those with higher ESC also generally had positive working relationships with family members.

5.6 Personal wellbeing

While the participant may not have been aware of the connection, it was very apparent to the interviewer that those farmers interviewed with the highest ESC almost without exception paid attention to their own wellbeing. This was particularly with regard to their physical wellbeing. The following examples were given:

- “I train several times a week as a long distance runner and I am constantly trying to beat my personal bests”
- “I am always capable of at least a half marathon”
- “I completed an iron man event last month”
- “I play tennis twice a week in the summer and badminton in the winter”
- “My off-farm cow-free days are important to me”.

This connection with physical fitness was present but we also noticed a sort of rudimentary psychological assessment of wellbeing going on. Often shown on the ESC report as high scoring in accurate self-awareness and self-assessment, high ESC farmers seemed more able to determine which farm activities they did not want to do and which did not make them feel good and organised activities accordingly. Often this meant the older farm business owner with high ESC was no longer doing the milking on a regular basis and had on several occasions noted to us that the milking had got them down with its anti-social hours and repetitive nature.

One participant had recently taken part in an off farm personal development programme, designed for a group of farmers, on personal well-being, where emphasis was placed on the importance of diet and fitness on the ability to perform at ones best as a leader. They found this revelatory and transforming in terms of personal practice. It has helped them to focus on the importance of looking after self in order to run the business more effectively.

5.7 High performing teams

This heading embraces probably the greatest number of emotional and social competencies and was at the heart of the interviews with the participants. It was very clear that some farmers were better than others at managing and leading staff. Those who appeared best at it (inferred from discussions with them – in other words not observed in practice) also had the highest levels of emotional intelligence and often scored highly in social competence terms as well – though not necessarily. In particular they had reasonable or high levels of emotional awareness. This meant that they recognised their own emotions, were better able to listen to their intuitions and incorporate these in decision making. They were better at accurate self-assessment. This meant that they were better at knowing their strengths and limitations and were more open to feedback from others and more interested in their own development.

Participants were asked to describe the sort of relationship they have with staff. Those with higher levels of ESC made comments like:

- "I want my staff to be as involved as possible in the business and to make decisions"
- "I am proud of the relationship with my staff. I want to help them be a part of our success. We are under a lot of pressure at certain times of the year and I want them to feel appreciated"
- "We are all in this together – no one goes home till everyone has finished"
- "Management by walking around – I like to talk to everyone but generally happy to let them get on with it. I express the strategy and communicate a lot with what we are trying to achieve. I show an interest in what they are doing and I am willing to let people make mistakes as long as they are on board"
- "I enjoy seeing my job as making it easier for the others to do theirs, improving the working environment and involving everyone in the planning process".

One participant who would be categorised as scoring high for ESC and who ran a large enterprise was already running emotional intelligence training as part of a wider management development training programme for all farm staff. This person also knew his own weak areas of ESC, from being a part of the programme himself, and which he was working on.

During the interviews, farmers were asked to describe what they have learned from working with others. Those farmers with generally higher ESC scores found this question easier to answer. They were able to think and articulate the rules by which they have learnt to deal with staff in an effective manner. Those with the lowest scores were less able to think of anything particularly relevant in answer to the question.

- "It is important to take a balanced approach, to get a consensus and work with good ideas"
- "When I am tense it impacts on others – I try to get off the farm to unwind"
- "Give and take, join in and work as a team – share the bad jobs".

5.8 When things go wrong

In the semi-structured interviews, we explored participant's reactions when activities connected to running the business, were not going so well. We were interested in their awareness of conflict and their skills and coping mechanisms for dealing with difficult issues and decisions. We were interested in exploring their emotional competencies such as emotional awareness, self-assessment, self-control, adaptability and persistence. In terms of social competencies, under this heading we were interested in understanding others, communication, conflict management, building bonds, developing others and teamwork and collaboration. One of the questions sometimes

asked was “what sort of things connected to your business, would most likely lead you to feel angry or frustrated”. The evaluation showed that participants with poor response to unexpected events tended to feel tense found it difficult to relax and found it more difficult to relax after work and also tended to feel nervous before important occasions and tended to worry about things going wrong. Those with higher levels of ESC tended to be the opposite – tended to find it easier to relax, rarely felt tense and were generally calm and untroubled. They also tended to feel calm before important occasions, were less affected by key events and free from worry. It was also clear in many instances that those with the highest overall levels of ESC were more likely to be optimistic – to expect things to turn out well and to look to the positive aspects of a situation and generally have an optimistic view of the future. They were also more likely to trust people, see others as reliable and honest and believe what others say. Higher ESC participants were more likely to be tolerant of others mistakes, saw mistakes as a necessary part of letting people get on with it and learn, and were better able to express themselves to others in a way which was not construed as threatening.

We also noted that the participants with the highest ESC scores were also highly task orientated. They described situations where they were very swift and firm to reprimand people whose actions threatened performance. They knew when to be tough and were not afraid or reluctant to be so. Generally, they had significantly higher results for leadership, achievement drive, and persistence. What also marked them out though, was their ability to use reprimand in a positive way to develop others and build bonds and foster teamwork and collaboration. The common key, though, was that they were not afraid of conflict – rather they embraced it as something more than a necessary evil.

Several participants were obviously less comfortable dealing with conflict even to the extent that their communication skills limited their ability to be clear about their instructions. It is too complicated to assert some simple reason why these farmers were reluctant to deal with conflict and it is probable that there are as many reasons for it as there were interviews. For instance; lack of role model in how to do it, not wanting to sour relationships and lacking confidence to handle disagreement without souring them, wanting to be popular, therefore remaining passive when there is a clear need to be positively assertive. These behaviours show in different ways – some farmers would be overly tolerant but described situations where they would then lose their temper, when in reality, they had not intervened early enough. Others might not be clear about their instructions and requirements at the beginning of a task and then blame the worker for poor performance. These individuals tended to be less connected, have less working relationships and certainly had less opportunity to develop the social and management competencies to deal with staff in an appropriate manner and had not developed the range of responses needed to manage even a small team. It was clear that in some cases the farmer was reluctant to grow their business any further because they were fearful of their limitations in dealing with staff

and off-farm relationships. It was also clear to the interviewer that these types could relatively easily have support for developing these skills and would rapidly improve.

5.9 The phenomenon of high emotional skills and low social skills

We noticed that a number of our participants scored relatively higher in emotional intelligence competencies than they did for their social intelligence competencies. In other words, these people were relatively good at self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. They had better than average levels of self-control, conscientiousness and adaptability. They also had good levels of achievement drive, initiative and persistence.

However, in a number of cases they scored lower in social competencies than might have been expected from their score in emotional competencies. In other words, these people were noticeably lower in understanding others, communication, conflict management, leadership, building bonds and developing others, given that they had reasonable or high emotional competency scores.

These farmers may have been good farmers and some of them had farms showing in the top quartile for profitability. One possible explanation for this is the lack of exposure to issues and situations in their business which helped them to develop these social competencies over time. Dairy farming can be relatively isolated for the farmer on small and mid-sized units. There is a lack of opportunity to develop social skills involved in managing people and a general lack of opportunity to interact. This means that self-confidence and capability in some key skills is not improved over time.

Nevertheless, we met several farmers who were clearly competent in running their business profitably. They were emotionally aware – they were clear about describing their emotions and they had some recognition how emotions affect our performance. From this they had a strong sense of accurate self-assessment. This meant that they had a candid sense of their personal strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision of where they wanted to go and the goals for their business. These farmers also had a degree of self-confidence and courage that came from this, which was certainty about their capabilities, values and goals. In some cases they would say that they did not want to grow their business too much because the people side was something they were not very good at.

In other words, their high emotional competence enabled them to recognise that they had a weakness in managing people and they used this knowledge and self-insight to make decisions about the type of business they wanted to build.

5.10 Lack opportunity to develop ESC

- It was clear from the interviews that those individuals with high ESC had developed them due to a number of reasons: Because of parental figures who

had provided great role modelling in their early years and early adult formative period

- In a limited number of cases, because they had had or taken great educational opportunities, eg one had completed an MBA
- Because they had developed these skills on the job through working on relationships with suppliers, maximising opportunities to develop good people skills through farming connected networks and other non-farming interests and networks.

Conversely, what appeared to hold back farmers with low ESC seemed to be a lack of the three factors above. They did not have great role models in the family system on the farm, responsibility or succession was not being passed down in a responsible way. They had not had relevant training and learning opportunities to consider the importance of these skills and they did not demonstrate an ability to learn from everyday activities.

5.11 Unaddressed weaknesses in ESC

Age is an important factor. If ESC skills are low and have not been developed then weaknesses in ESC become more important as leaders get older. Where these weaknesses are not addressed and the person is not aware of them then the behaviours which are unhelpful are likely to become more pronounced and lead to problems in relationships in the business, managing the team and in dealing with people successfully. In other sectors, these are known as derailers, ie very weak emotional competencies in specific areas which get worse, typically in mid to late forties and above. The two most common reasons of those who derail and fail in other sectors are:

- **Rigidity:** They were unable to adapt their style to changes around them or they were unable to take in or respond to feedback about traits they needed to change or improve – they couldn't listen or learn
- **Poor relationships:** They were repeatedly being too harshly critical, insensitive or demanding, so that they alienated those they were working with and possibly without even being aware of it.

Obviously, in large organisations these traits and reasons are sometimes spotted and the individual offered the opportunity to develop and grow. The alternative might be that the problem becomes such an issue that they are at risk of losing their job. In farming there are no critical judges looking at farmers, helping them to spot these weaknesses and offering coaching and support. The interviewer could see in several of the participants, in their interviews, these derail tendencies showing quite clearly, and a lack of awareness of them and the negative impact on farm profitability. Here are some examples from those conversations:

- One farmer had got into severe litigious problems due to basic ineptitude and lack of ability to offer basic first line supervisor level oversight of key team members. In this case, even a modest level of training in managing others and self-awareness would have avoided the situation
- Several farmers described problems with their own lack of self-awareness and self-control, which led to a loss of temper, severe irritability or them completely withdrawing from the situation they needed to lead and manage. They described occasions where they handled pressure less well and became more prone to moodiness and angry outbursts
- Some farmers lacked empathy and sensitivity and the result was that, from their descriptions of how they handled staff, they were often arrogant, abrasive or given to mild intimidation of staff. This contrasted very sharply with those farmers with high ESC who were more empathic and sensitive, and who showed tact and consideration in their dealings with everyone, from staff, family members, suppliers, customers and advisers
- Some farmers who had a very low score on “building bonds”, also appeared to have not built up a strong network of trusted mutually beneficial relationships. Those with high scores for building bonds appeared more appreciative of diversity and were able to get along with all kinds of people.

5.12 Farmer feedback on the assessment and feedback

Farmers’ reactions to the process of reading and receiving feedback on the report were explored at the end of the face to face interviews. Every participant interviewed was asked “Now you have had a chance to reflect on the reports with an expert, has the exercise been interesting and/or worthwhile to you?”

All participants were positive about the experience and said ‘yes’ in answer to this question. There were no negative responses to this question from anyone. All farmers who completed the questionnaire thought that it reflected back a pretty accurate picture of how they are.

“Yes – I can see that I need to find ways to relax more. I can get down in the dumps and it is important to recognise this and do something about it.”

6. Developing emotional intelligence and knowledge transfer

This research set out to establish the relationship between farm performance and emotional and social intelligence. The quantitative and qualitative research results set out in sections 4 and 5 of this report indicate that there is, as could be expected in comparison to research in other sectors, a positive link between performance and ESC. Farmers high in emotional and social competence are generally more successful and more positive in their outlook.

In this section, some initial thoughts are set out on how the industry can begin to use the learning to improve knowledge transfer. The evidence collected in this study provides a strong indication that emotional and social competencies can and should form a part of future development opportunities for farmers.

6.1 Relevance of ESC to knowledge transfer

AHDB Dairy's mission (Dairy.ahdb.org.uk 2015) is to "Promote world class knowledge to British dairy farmers so they can profit from a sustainable future". Its strategy to achieve this mission is to select relevant information and deliver it through a variety of channels, including meetings, discussion groups, newsletters, conferences, electronic methods and by working with industry partners.

The knowledge it wishes to impart covers a very broad range of topics, from feeding, breeding and animal health through to sustainability, management and leadership. As all farmers contribute to its income, it strives to be as inclusive as possible and address the needs of progressive farmers who are hungry for information and want to be at the cutting edge, and more passive farmers who are difficult to engage with.

The research conducted in the course of this study has highlighted that in general, those with higher levels of ESC are more successful. In particular there is a significant correlation between a range of key competencies and business performance. These included leadership, teamwork and collaboration, accurate self-assessment, persistence, developing others and conscientiousness.

Some farmers had very low scores for these and other competencies. 15% of the research sample had at least 80% of their scores in the unlikely or less likely criteria of emotional and social competencies. This raises some serious questions for activity and effort aimed at improving their performance. A lack of motivation, self-awareness, persistence and conscientiousness amongst this group makes it difficult to see how they can be supported to improve performance. In Table 7 we have set out how levels of competence in these skills are going to impact on any motivation to engage in learning and development.

Table 7: ESC competencies and knowledge transfer

Competence descriptor	Behaviours amenable to knowledge transfer	Behaviours limiting knowledge transfer
Leadership <i>(takes a long term view)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is fairly strongly inclined to take a long-term view, planning for the future <p>Strategic long term perspective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Has considerable difficulty planning for the future and may be too focused on immediate rather than strategic issues <p>Focussed on immediate tasks</p>
Conscientiousness <i>(organised and not easily distracted)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tends to be meticulous with detail ✓ Strives hard to meet commitments and keep promises <p>More likely to commit to activity that is seen as beneficial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? May tend to be less meticulous with detail. Sees deadlines as flexible and may leave some tasks unfinished ? Is inclined to be somewhat selective in helping colleagues who have difficulties <p>Unlikely to commit to learning and development irrespective of likely benefits</p>
Accurate self-assessment <i>(awareness of strengths and weaknesses)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is likely to be very open to feedback from others ✓ Critically evaluates information; can be self-critical <p>Open to improving self and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Tends to be a little sceptical and may doubt what others say about him ? May not be all that open to feedback from others <p>Has difficulty in recognising the need to change</p>
Persistence <i>(optimism and determination)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is fairly strongly motivated to attain personal goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? May prefer to work at an easy pace requiring only few demands

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thrives on being kept busy and greatly enjoys having a lot to do <p>Wants to succeed and can manage competing demands on time, open to learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? May currently lack the motivation to attain personal goals ? May become very easily discouraged by others' criticisms <p>Not motivated to succeed and is discouraged by criticism – disengages easily</p>
<p>Developing others <i>(believes in growth and development)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is quite likely to take responsibility for developing others ✓ Is likely to pick up quite quickly on others' needs and learning style <p>Is open to the concept of learning and allocates time to do so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? May strongly avoid taking responsibility for developing others ? May place low priority on finding time for development discussions with others <p>Learning is not a priority and little importance is attached to it</p>

Our contention is that no amount of opportunity to learn and develop new skills, will be taken on board unless the root cause of the problem is addressed. In most cases, this is a lack of motivation to develop and an inability to develop others. It won't necessarily be easy to address these shortfalls but highlighting the behaviours of high performers might at least invite people to reflect on how their own feelings are limiting their potential for growth and improving their personal productivity.

Competencies that have been rated as 'Very likely' represent a 'natural fit' to the candidate's personality profile. If their actual competence in these areas is not particularly strong (ie if, in reality, they have a need to develop these competencies further) then they may find it relatively easy and 'effortless' to develop these competencies. On the other hand, those competencies that have been rated as Unlikely or Less likely may be more difficult for the candidate to develop (if, in reality, they are below standard) because they would not come that naturally to them.

On a more positive note, without exception, the farmers we engaged with during the course of the research were genuinely interested in exploring their own strengths and

weaknesses and as the interviews progressed would easily engage in conversations about the sort of behaviour changes they could make to improve their performance as business leaders. In the course of our interviews, we found more evidence that high performers attend to personal development of themselves and their staff.

We often think that improvement can be linked to learning new skills, like planning or by finding out and learning a new way to carry out a process like treating mastitis. However, focussing on skills and knowledge doesn't mean that development will take place. If your attitude to the training isn't right, all the knowledge and skill in the world won't make you put it into practice. If you have a negative attitude to planning (many people don't see the point of producing a cash-flow) any amount of training isn't going to work. Therefore, by thinking about our feelings (why do I feel this way about cash-flow budgeting), we are more likely to develop new habits. Simply relying on the same feelings to guide you will only produce the same results as before.

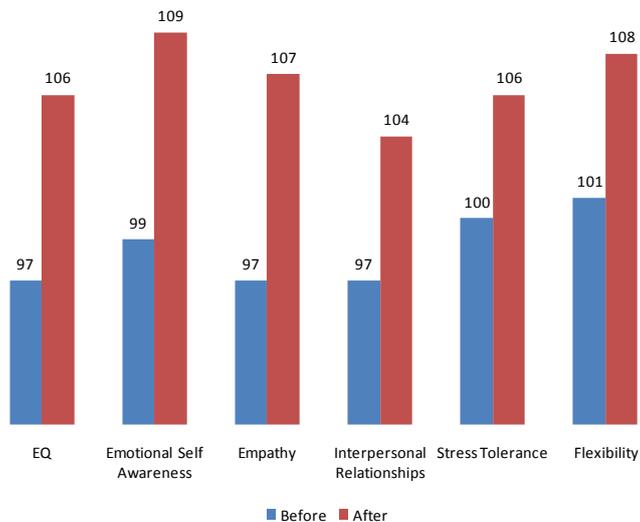
The pathway or route map towards improving ESC is relatively straightforward and consists of motivation, knowledge and resources. If farmers can be motivated to change behaviours, know how to go about making these changes and are provided with the opportunity and resources to do so, improvements in performance will follow. This has been demonstrated in other sectors and partly explains why coaching is commonly used across many different organisations.

6.2 Assisting farmers to develop their emotional intelligence

Several studies in other sectors provide supportive evidence that an individual can, with appropriate guidance, improve their ESC. Clarke (2010) reported that six months after two training days focused on improving EI for 53 project managers, four of the six measures used were significantly improved compared to a month before the training. 'Understanding Emotions', 'Empathy', 'Teamwork' and 'Managing Conflict' scores were significantly improved six months after the course. Customer service has been highlighted as likely fertile ground for testing and applying EI theory, due to the high emotional demands on customer-facing staff. One study of 56 Iranian bank tellers found significant improvements in their ratings in 300 customer assessments.

Figure 4 relates to a leadership intervention in the construction industry. The group training was structured as four one-day workshops. Wide scale and significant improvements in ESC competencies were achieved as a result of the intervention. More detail can be found in Bharwaney [2006, pp 183-197].

Figure 4: Group training can increase emotionally intelligent behaviour among senior managers



Source: M. Sjolund et al, 2001 Skanska; n = 29 Sweden

(Boyatzis et al, 2002) assessed EI measures (and many other measures) of enrolling and graduating MBA students from 1989 to 2001 looking at five cohorts. Most cohorts improved significantly on most measures, with the effect increasing as courses started to incorporate elements of EI in their curriculum. The implication of these findings for the curriculum in land based colleges and for development programmes aimed at building future industry managers and leaders is to incorporate activity that is directed to improving ESC. So management programmes should be just as focussed on developing recognised ESC competencies as they are towards developing skills like business planning, financial management and marketing management.

EI can increase with age, experience and training. Our IQ is fixed at an early age and peaks by the time we have left school. On the other hand, new experiences can help to improve EI. This is good news, as it provides the clearest evidence that it is something that can be worked on with scope for making a positive impacts on business performance and personal wellbeing. We may not become more clever but we can become far more effective. However, there are two particular barriers to overcome. First is evidence that it is going to work and secondly, that a farmer believes the time and effort put into developing ESC is worthwhile, compared to alternative uses of his time. A fair amount of self-awareness and self-assessment is needed to achieve this and activity to raise interest and awareness of the ESC framework would be needed to achieve this.

6.3 The language of emotional intelligence

Talking about emotions and feelings is not necessarily a concept you would readily associate with or discuss in relation to farmers. They are portrayed as tough, hardy and resilient individuals and may wish to appear so even if this doesn't happen to be true. Throughout the course of this research, professionals who deal with farmers and some farmers have enquired if using words like emotion and feelings will detract farmers from participating in the project or from taking note of any recommendations that may flow from it. However, throughout the project we have struggled to invent other terms which might be considered to be more 'farmer friendly' or more acceptable to the farming community. There are problems with using different terminology rather than those in common use in this field:

- Would an alternative term be any more acceptable to farmers? Even if a new set of words could be identified to substitute for the terms emotional intelligent or emotional competence, it is impossible to move away from the nucleus of what the subject is all about; emotions and feelings
- EI assessment, coaching and development is used in all manner of occupations, from office workers, airline pilots, in the military, education, retail, engineering, with scientists and in many other walks of life. Because of its widespread use in other occupations, it is hard to appreciate why it should be any more difficult to adopt and apply its use to agriculture. If it is difficult then it is hard to see how changing the terminology used to describe it would be the one thing that would increase its acceptance amongst farmers
- If you move away from the common language used in EI research and the development of ESC, the credibility of the discipline could be lost or weakened. Therefore, in practice, even if you found new ways to describe EI, you would still need to refer to the evidence that gives the topic credibility and this would make it impossible to avoid using the terms associated with emotional intelligence when referring to it.

Emotional intelligence is not all about sharing your innermost thoughts. Sometimes expressing your emotions will be useful but, more often than not, it's about managing your emotion so you don't allow your own or other people's emotions to overwhelm you. So being emotionally intelligent involves being able to know yourself, how you are feeling and finding the most appropriate way to deal with this response.

6.4 Time or lack of it

We observed that it was easier to persuade individuals with higher ESI scores to participate in the research and we spent less time reminding this group to participate if they hadn't completed the questionnaire as requested.

6.5 Enabling improvement in ESC

On the basis of the evidence collected in this study, improving ESC should be considered to be worthwhile. Section 6.2 provides plenty of evidence that exists to show that ESC can be improved. However, deciding how to go about doing so in the most efficient and effective way is a significant challenge. To bring about improvement in EI, various models have been proposed, (Goleman, 1998, Sparrow & Knight, 2006). They have in common four main elements: increasing self-knowledge of the trainee; the selection of areas to improve; a change plan; and finally development of new habits. Goleman's framework has been adapted below as a 12-step approach, relevant to developing farm leaders:

Step 1 – Assess the job

Understand the role of the individual – this should point us to defining the competencies important for the role. Training for irrelevant competencies is pointless. The research we have undertaken indicates that high performing farms are more likely to have higher competencies in leadership, conscientiousness, accurate self-assessment, persistence and developing others. Considering the modest sample size, we cannot rule out the potential importance of other competencies, despite strong statistical relationships between them and farm performance having not been found in this study.

Step 2 – Assess the individual

We used a psychometric tool, and there are many of these. Unfortunately, they may not be reliable and it makes sense to back these up by talking to someone knowledgeable about EI. The individual's profile of strengths and limitations should be assessed to identify what needs improving. Ideally, training should be tailored to individual needs.

The OPQ/SHL tool proved to be acceptable to farmers, both to complete and to interpret. The guidance provided in the appendix to this report illustrates what behaviours demonstrate both high and low competence and can be used to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of an individual.

Step 3 – Deliver assessments with care

Feedback on any assessment should be handled delicately. It is easy to assume a tough exterior is matched by an equally resilient inner core but the reality is everyone is sensitive to criticism. Bad feedback can worsen performance, whereas good feedback can improve and individuals self-confidence and motivation.

How you feedback is very important – based on our experience, the assessment is apt to make a person feel vulnerable. It is important that the person delivering the feedback is trustworthy and demonstrates a high level of integrity. Confidentiality and the ability not to judge the person being assessed is important. It is not a practice that should be attempted without proper training or by someone with low ESC.

Step 4 – Gauge readiness

People only learn if they are ready and willing to do so. Make sure the person being developed actually wants to improve in a certain area. If they don't see the need to improve, make cultivating a desire to improve your priority.

Some of the people we spoke to quickly and readily picked up on the areas they needed to improve. For example, one farmer realised what was holding him back was his lack of competency in conflict management and developing others. A lack of self-confidence in another farmer when challenged seemed to become a problem that could be tackled rather than something impossible to address. On the other hand, some farmers who were interested in feedback had not reached a point where it was obvious that a specific development area had been reached. This is probably because they had not made the link between their feelings and behaviours and how this impacts on the performance of the business.

Step 5 – Motivate

People learn to the degree they are motivated. Making sure people are aware of the benefits of developing a skill by demonstrating how it will benefit them, their business or career. If people are unmotivated, the training will lack effectiveness.

A simple example of this would be the discussion that took place in a feedback session. The farmer concerned felt nervous and uneasy about dealing with suppliers when they contacted him. This lack of self-control and self-confidence was addressed by asking the person to recall what happened in the past, dealing with similar situations. It became obvious to the farmer that the fear could be brought under control if he followed a simple routine. This was a big problem for the farmer but he was motivated to make changes to how he behaved because it was important to him to deal with this destructive scenario.

Step 6 – Make change self-directed

One size fits all training programmes fit no one specifically. There is a need to direct a high proportion of any development activity to addressing the skills that need to be improved.

Putting people on a generic training course may not work. In agricultural business training, the focus is on knowledge and skills. For example, helping people to produce plans or forecasts, to carry out appraisals or to benchmark their business. More effort spent asking people to think about their current roles and how they are performing, their goals, to consider their attitude to training and to reflect on how they feel about specific areas will bring a more rounded appreciation of what skills need to be improved and how their own feelings may be blocking their own motivation to change. Because learning needs to be self-directed and allow those participating time to reflect and receive feedback on their development goals, it makes more sense to provide training in a programme of planned events spread out over several months, rather than discrete training events.

Step 7 – Focus on clear manageable goals

By providing clarity on the specific competence that is being developed, people will be more able to focus on what is being taught and follow a plan to achieve improvement. An assessment tool like the OPQ/ESC one used in the course of this research helps individuals to narrow down the competencies they would like to improve. One of the farmers we interviewed could see that a lack of self-control (temper tantrum) in pressured situations was causing him to have problems in managing his staff. In this situation, the principle problem was not with the staff, but with the farmer. The clear manageable goal in this case is to find ways to arrest the emotional hijack and find another, more productive way to deal with the situation.

Step 8 – Prevent relapse

Very small changes in behaviour can have a large impact on performance but old habits die hard. People must recognise that change comes from adopting new practices, otherwise training and development is a waste of time. One way to prevent relapse is to encourage the learner to put into practice what has been taught. Practice makes perfect to the extent that a new behaviour, while seemingly awkward at first, eventually becomes as natural as breathing. Taking the previous example, the farmer could keep a diary of the situations where he had lost his cool and also where he had successfully managed to deal with the situation in a more productive way. The concept of a programme taking place over several months will be more likely to deliver the behaviour change and improvement in ESC than by leaving individuals unsupported. Doing this would help the individual to reflect with others on how successful the new behaviour is, compared to the past.

Step 9 – Provide support

Like-minded people trying to make similar changes can offer crucial ongoing support. Go it alone makes it hard to achieve change but with a network of support and encouragement, the challenge will be manageable.

Having a mentor, coach or partner reviewing the diary and progress will help to prevent slipping back into the old way of doing things. A peer group within a development programme would also be an effective way of delivering support.

Step 10 – Provide Models

If people can observe or experience the competence, they are much more likely to be able to put it into practice themselves. Highly respected farmers who embody the skill being taught acting as role models could demonstrate to others how these behaviours contribute to their success. AHDB could highlight influential farmers with the competencies that are linked to success.

Step 11 – Encourage

Change will be more effective the more times the competence is supported and encouraged by people who are around the individual looking to achieve change. By sharing their goals with others, an individual will open the possibility for receiving support. Kept to themselves the challenge will be far more difficult. Yet again, individuals participating in a development programme are more likely to receive sustained encouragement than individuals who attempt to go solo in their efforts to develop their ESC.

Step 12 – Recognise

If the change is recognised as being important and worthwhile by the individual's family, employees and other stakeholders they are more likely to feel the change is worthwhile and deliver lasting benefits. AHDB Dairy could take a lead by encouraging farmers to recognise the need to develop capabilities.

ESC are a set of learnable competencies, everybody can improve on their current level. Typically there is an absence of this type of development work in this industry but they are an absolutely vital set of skills in enabling the industry to move forward. Skills that should be recognised as being vital to improve sector resilience include:

- Personal wellbeing
- Taking a long-term strategic perspective
- Dealing with crisis and stress

- Positive staff relationships
- Succession
- Providing and receiving feedback with staff, partners
- Developing supportive networks to make high quality decisions.

6.6 Future work

The research carried out and described in the previous sections has described the importance and relevance of developing farm leadership skills by improving ESC. The 12-step framework in Section 6.5 has described a pathway to delivering improvement. However, the question of whether emotional intelligence can be developed in the farming community can only be answered fully where development activity is tried and tested. Therefore, a research project that makes a contribution specifically to the agricultural field, by examining the effect of training on a sample of farmers and identifying whether changes occur in their ESC and related farm management competencies, would be worthwhile. The project might follow the same pattern as the previous research by delivering an assessment and one-to-one review session within a development programme.

The design of the study may look like this:

- 12 farmers recruited to take part in a study on Developing Leadership Skills by improving emotional and social competencies based around two locations of approximately six farmers in each group – perhaps utilising existing discussion groups
- Farmers assessed using OPQ/ESC diagnostic or similar
- Individual one-to-one review session directed towards identifying change goals
- Identify and record measures for job satisfaction and job performance
- Farmers attend four, 1-day ESC skills development workshops spaced about one month apart, which combine expert input with ample time for participant input and feedback on the progress they are making
- Three months later, farmers attend refresher/feedback course
- Assessments of farmer's appreciation/satisfaction/appetite for more/willingness to pay, gathered after the courses
- Farmers ESC assessed after 6 months
- Record job satisfaction and job performance. If practical, getting feedback from employees or partners on their assessment of the impact of the development programme
- The farmers involved in the programme could be from different parts of the UK and across different UK sectors

7. Conclusion

Lack of interpersonal sensitivity, personal flexibility and emotional resilience have tremendous capacity today to arrest the career prospects of intelligent, qualified and technically proficient professional farmers. Being able to carry out farm work and farm management tasks, being able to get the nub of the issue in a logical and insightful manner, demonstrating excellent project management skills and being task driven count for little if the individual is a source of friction in the team, has difficulty dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty and is emotionally ill-equipped to handle stress and criticism.

APPENDIX

8. Emotional and social competencies

- Emotional and Social Competence (ESC) has its own taxonomy that is used to classify and order the competencies into groups with similar characteristics. It is divided into two main groups; personal competence and social competence. Personal competence is divided further into self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation competencies. Two sub groups, empathy and social skills, are used to describe social competence. Each of these five groups is divided further by twenty competencies as shown in Table 8, below
- To help people interpret their own assessments and to provide a more complete description of the ESC framework, this section contains a definition of each of these competencies
- In addition, this section contains the results of the statistical analysis comparing the scores for the farmers taking the assessments and for the comparator population of international business managers
- At the end of each section, descriptors from the assessment results are included. These highlight high and low competence behaviours. This should help people to evaluate how their personal scores can be interpreted.

Emotional and social competence				
Personal competence			Social competence	
1 Self-awareness	2. Self-regulation	3. Motivation	4. Empathy	5. Social skills
1.1 Emotional self-awareness	2.1 Emotional self-control	3.1 Achievement drive	4.1 Understanding others	5.1 Developing others
1.2 Accurate self-assessment	2.2 Conscientiousness	3.2 Initiative	4.2 Organisational awareness	5.2 Leadership
1.3 Self-confidence	2.3 Adaptability	3.3 Persistence	4.3 Service orientation	5.3 Change catalyst
				5.4 Influence
				5.5 Conflict management
				5.6 Teamwork and collaboration
				5.7 Building Bonds
				5.8 Communication

8.1 Self awareness competencies

Self-awareness is considered an important element of EI that refers to the ability of a person to be able to identify and control his or her own feelings, thoughts and needs. Having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and a decent amount of self-confidence are essential for being able to manage ourselves to achieve our goals. Seeing into the blind spot we have of ourselves is essentially what self-awareness is all about. We may easily see what is wrong or right about other people but it is far harder to see ourselves as others see us.

8.1.1 Emotional self awareness competence

This refers to the ability to appreciate how you are feeling and how this influences what you are going to do. Being aware of your emotions gives you the opportunity to make conscious decisions about how you react. People who are aware of their feelings are more likely to be able to bring them under control. People high in self-awareness are remarkably clear in their understanding of what they do well, what motivates and satisfies them and what feelings and behaviour may derail them from achieving their goals.

Self-awareness and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Self-awareness competency of 4.32, which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.014$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Is likely to incorporate both emotional and objective information when making decisions
- Is fairly relaxed, enabling him to put his feelings into perspective
- Is likely to pay attention to objective information when making decisions but without neglecting intuitions and feelings
- Is interested in analysing people's behaviour.

Low competence

- Rarely takes the time to analyse the reasons for people's behaviour
- Is very likely to underestimate the complexities behind emotions and their effects on other people
- Is very tense and may have considerable difficulty putting his feelings into perspective.

8.1.2 The self assessment competence

Self-assessment is knowing about our own strengths and weaknesses. People with this competence are more reflective and able to learn from experience and more open to feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning and self-development. Self-management is what happens when, as a result of your self-awareness, you act appropriately. You may decide to act on an emotion or do nothing – in either case you are in control and direct your behaviour positively towards achieving your goals.

Self-assessment and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Self-assessment competency of 4.42 which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.019$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 8.

High competence

- Is likely to be very open to feedback from others
- Critically evaluates information; can be self-critical
- Tends to accept what others say about him, without being too naive
- Pays a fair amount of attention to his own intuitions.

Low competence

- Tends to be a little sceptical, and may doubt what others say about him
- May not be all that open to feedback from others
- May be inclined to accept information at face value, including information about him
- Does not pay very much attention to his own feelings or intuition.

8.1.3 Self confidence competence

This is about how much you accept and value yourself as a person. Accepting and valuing ourselves is essential for good health, happiness and success. People with this competence present themselves with self-assurance; have 'presence', they can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right and they are decisive, able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures.

For people who lack self-confidence every failure confirms a sense of incompetence. The absence of self-confidence can manifest itself in feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and crippling self-doubt. Extreme self-confidence can look like arrogance, especially if the person lacks social skills.

Self-confidence and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population the farmers in our sample had a mean Self-confidence competency of 4.92 which is similar to the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.79$). Half the population were between a score of 4 and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

High competence

- Has the courage to speak out and express his views openly
- Is inclined to bend the rules when necessary
- Feels at ease when first meeting people
- Makes fairly fast decisions, reaching conclusions reasonably quickly
- Feels very calm and confident before an important event.

Low competence

- Is fairly cautious when making decisions, needing an abundance of evidence before committing himself
- Seems very hesitant to express his views openly and constructively
- Feels very awkward when first meeting people; may lack 'presence'
- Tends to feel nervous before an important event.

8.2 Self regulation competencies

8.2.1 Emotional self control

Emotional self-control is the first of the Self-management Competences. A person with high levels of EI is able to control their emotions. In situations in which an individual has different ideas or opinions to others, negative feelings might arise. However, with the ability to self-regulate, they are able to respond appropriately, regardless of their personal feelings. Self-regulation is being able to adapt to change with ease, dealing with things with integrity, thoughtfulness and the ability to say 'no' when needed.

The feeling of helplessness about work pressures is in itself likely to be magnified amongst small business owners and employees. People with a stronger sense that they can control what happens to them are less likely to become depressed, angry, or helpless.

Emotional self-control and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Self-control competency of 6.2, which is far higher than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.001$). Half the population were between a score of 5 (average) and 8 (quite likely). The range in scores was between 1 and 8.

High competence

- Is usually quite calm, relaxed and patient
- Strongly controls his feelings as the situation requires
- Is inclined to deal constructively with criticism
- Usually expects things to work out well; focuses more on positives than negatives.

Low competence

- Is generally quite tense and impatient
- May expect things to go wrong; focuses more on negatives than positives
- May sometimes take criticism too personally
- Is very sensitive to criticism and easily hurt
- Is inclined to express feelings quite openly, situation irrespective.

8.2.2 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is about taking responsibility for personal performance, meeting commitments and adopting an organised approach to one's work. People high on this competence meet commitments and keep promises, hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives and are very well organised. In a dairy farming scenario this might include the attention to detail commensurate with ensuring a repetitive daily routine (on the basis that cows are generally perceived to perform better when there are minimal changes to their daily management), forward planning (eg phoning the contractor 7-10 days ahead of target silage making date, rather than waiting for the good weather but when the contractor is already booked up).

People low on conscientiousness have low impulse control, with little or no ability to delay gratification. They are unlikely to be punctual, self-disciplined or organised in how they approach work. People can be excessively conscientious and life becomes a relentless challenge to conform to rules and expectations; this is often associated with a lack of creativity. If it is associated with a lack of empathy or social skills, the individual is likely to be seen as a bullying perfectionist.

Conscientiousness and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Conscientiousness competency of 3.35, which is significantly lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.001$). Half the population were between a score of 2 (unlikely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 8.

High competence

- Is concerned about and likes helping colleagues who have difficulties
- Closely follows rules and regulations
- Tends to be meticulous with detail
- Strives hard to meet commitments and keep promises.

Low competence

- Finds rules and procedures very constricting
- May tend to be less meticulous with detail. Sees deadlines as flexible and may leave some tasks unfinished
- May tend to interpret rules and procedures too flexibly at times
- Unlikely to adopt a meticulous approach to work
- Is inclined to be somewhat selective in helping colleagues who have difficulties.

8.2.3 Adaptability competence

Adaptability is about being open to new ideas and approaches and being flexible in responding to change. People with this competence seek out new ideas from a wide variety of sources; entertain original solutions to problems; generate new ideas and bring fresh perspectives. People high on adaptability are flexible in how they see events and adapt their responses to circumstances. They are more able to handle multiple demands, shifting priorities and rapid change.

People lacking this capability are more likely to allow inertia to take over, not spot the signs of a coming sea change – or fearing to act on the implications. People who make strong emotional attachments with a fixed view of the future or fail to observe the changing marketplace or competitive dynamic are more likely than not to be ruled by fear, anxiety and personal discomfort with change.

Putting creative ideas into practice requires adaptability, along with other key competencies such as self-confidence, initiative, persistence and persuasiveness.

Adaptability and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had an adaptability competency of 5.38, which is similar to the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.149$). Half the population were between a score of 4 (less likely) and 7 (quite likely). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Tends to prefer variety and change to routine and familiarity
- Tends to adjust his behaviour to suit the situation
- Dislikes bureaucracy and the constraints of rules and procedures
- Is inclined to attend to issues as they arise
- Is quite comfortable working without clear guidelines
- Views the future in very positive terms.

Low competence

- Tends to have difficulty letting go of detail in favour of other priorities
- Tends to prefer routine and familiarity to variety and change
- Is unlikely to adjust his behaviour to suit the situation
- Is likely to feel quite uncomfortable in constantly changing environments
- May have a sense of foreboding about the future
- May only work best when guidelines are clear.

8.3 Motivation competencies

Motivation is another main element of the Personal Competence EI framework. A person with motivational elements is the kind of individual who always sets high goals, and then sets out to achieve them. They are more disposed to new ideas and finding better ways of achieving outcomes in their work. Motivation is beneficial in a person's life as it makes a person feel that their life is meaningful. In turn, they will try their best to achieve their personal goals.

8.3.1 Achievement drive competence

People with this competence are results oriented, with a high drive to meet their objectives and standards. They set challenging goals and take calculated risks. They are always looking for ways to improve their performance and will seek out new information and ways to improve. Leaders high on this competence will demand high standards, have clear goals, look out for feedback on their performance and embody these characteristics in their teams.

When it comes to setting goals or standards for themselves, people low in the achievement drive competence are happy go lucky and tend to seek work that doesn't stretch them. Goals are likely to be fuzzy or non-existent and no particular effort is expended attempting to get feedback on how well or how poorly, they are performing.

Achievement drive and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Achievement drive competency of 4.59, which is the same as the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.103$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 8.

High competence

- Fairly ambitious; quite likes having challenging goals and targets to work toward
- Is prepared to make decisions that others would regard as fairly risky
- Tends to favour unconventional over conventional work methods, leading to progress
- Tends to base decisions largely on facts and figures
- Tends to be more vigorous and energetic than most.

Low competence

- Does not appear particularly ambitious at present; may be looking for achievable rather than challenging targets
- May not be prepared to make a quick decision without taking considerable time to weigh up options
- Tends to dislike heavy work demands and may pursue goals less energetically than others
- Tends to favour conventional over unconventional work methods, despite indications that it may limit progress
- Tends to play down the importance of facts and figures when making decisions
- Is strongly disinclined to make a quick decision without a good deal of cautious analysis.

8.3.2 Initiative competence

People with initiative are ready to seize opportunities and more likely to pursue goals beyond what is required or expected of them. They will often cut through rules and red tape to get done what needs doing and mobilise others by being enterprising. Being proactive or getting ahead in the game pays off. People with this trait are likely to go the extra mile by staying up late and by putting in extra effort.

Constantly reacting to events, rather than being prepared for them, is typical of people lacking initiative. At the extreme it manifests itself as operating in crisis mode. A lack of initiative may be masking a sense of hopelessness and the sense that whatever happens in life is outside their control. Once into this feeling mode, the point of putting in extra effort seems unrewarding. Too much initiative can come over as micro-managing, with the consequence that staff don't feel valued.

Initiative and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Initiative competency of 4.81, which is the same as the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.484$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

High competence

- Is ready to seize opportunities
- Takes a longer-term view, setting goals for the future
- Cuts through red tape and is prepared to bend the rules to push through an initiative
- Sees himself as someone who comes up with a fair number of new ideas and suggestions
- Demonstrates far-sightedness by planning well into the future, foreseeing crises.

Low competence

- May miss opportunities through being overly cautious
- May be reluctant to bend the rules to push through an initiative
- May generate few ideas and suggestions of his own
- Is more likely to focus on immediate rather than longer-term goals
- May tend to pursue goals that are not particularly ambitious for himself
- May be seen as unimaginative with less of an inclination to generate new ideas of his own.

8.3.3 Persistence competence

People who are persistent bounce back. You can knock them over but they will get back up again even more determined to succeed. A key component of this competence is optimism, a belief that whatever the setback there is something that can be done to overcome it. They view mistakes as lessons we can learn from.

By contrast, pessimists will lack this competence. They see a failure as a fatal flaw in themselves that cannot be changed. This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and ends as hopelessness and helplessness. They view mistakes as yet another failure that reinforces the feeling of hopelessness.

Persistence and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Persistence competency of 4.61, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.202$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Is likely to focus on the positives and the expectation of succeeding
- Thrives on being kept busy and greatly enjoys having a lot to do
- Does not allow others' criticisms to de-motivate him
- Is fairly strongly motivated to attain personal goals.

Low competence

- May be strongly motivated by a fear of failure
- May prefer to work at an easy pace requiring only few demands
- May currently lack the motivation to attain personal goals
- May become very easily discouraged by others' criticisms
- May lack the ability to see things through to the end
- May tend to leave some tasks unfinished.

8.4 Empathy competencies

Empathy is the ability of a person to understand the feelings of others. Sometimes, a person is not always able to put their needs and wants first. Often, it is necessary to consider the feelings and needs of others. This is especially true in the workplace.

Sensing what others feel without their saying so captures the essence of empathy. Others rarely tell us in words what they feel; instead they tell us in the tone of their voice, facial expression and in other non-verbal ways. The ability to sense these subtle communications build on more basic competencies, particularly self-awareness and self-control. Without the ability to sense our own feelings or to keep them from swamping us, we will be hopelessly out of touch with the needs of others.

8.4.1 Understanding others

People with this competence sense others feelings and perspective taking an active interest in their concerns. They are attentive to emotional cues and listen well, show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives, and they help out based on an understanding of other people's needs and feelings.

Lacking such sensitivity, people they are with are likely to be turned off or perhaps even offended. Being emotionally tone deaf leads to social awkwardness, whether from misconstruing feelings or through a mechanical, out of tune bluntness or indifference that destroys rapport. One form this lack of empathy can take is responding to other people as stereotypes rather than as the unique individuals they are.

Understanding others is not the same as agreeing with them. Empathy taken to extremes is likely to result in a poorly performing business.

Understanding others and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Understanding others competency of 4.26, which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was significant ($P = 0.0105$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Is fairly strongly focused on trying to understand people's behaviour
- Tends to give sympathy and support to people who have problems
- Pays a fair degree of attention to what others say
- Shows great sensitivity and consideration toward people who have problems
- Is fairly gregarious; enjoys being around people
- His tendency to be less outspoken may enhance his capacity for empathy.

Low competence

- Tends to lack sympathy when considering other people's problems
- May be highly selective when listening to what others say
- His tendency to be openly critical of others may reduce his capacity for empathy
- Is not particularly gregarious; may not always enjoy other people's company
- Is often not inclined to analyse the reasons for people's behaviour
- Tends to be a loner with very little enjoyment of people's company.

8.4.2 Organisational awareness competence

The ability to read social and political currents in an organisation, read key power relationships are the hallmark of individuals rated highly with this competence. In possession of this skill, a person is better able to influence outcomes by being tuned into organisational realities. This competence goes hand in hand with an individual's ability to cultivate relationships and build an extensive network of people who can help them to pursue their goals.

A lack of this competence is more commonly found amongst those who prefer to keep their own company. Without the ability to appreciate what is shaping the views of others they are not well placed to take advantage of developing opportunities or exert any influence.

Organisational awareness and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Organisational awareness competency of 4.49, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.0689$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Is likely to be a good listener and will probably take the time to find out what others think
- Makes a strong attempt to accurately read key power relationships
- Enjoys interacting with colleagues less formally, thereby increasing the probability that he will pick up on social undercurrents
- His tendency to prefer dealing with opinions and feelings rather than facts and figures may enhance his ability to read the political climate accurately.

Low competence

- May not be interested in reading key power relationships
- His strong preference for dealing with facts and figures rather than opinions and feelings may reduce his ability to read the political climate accurately
- May not be interested in listening carefully enough to what others think
- May not particularly enjoy interacting with colleagues less formally, thereby reducing the probability that he will pick up on social undercurrents.

8.4.3 Service orientation

This competence is all about anticipating, recognising and meeting customer needs. People strong in this competence understand the needs of their customers and are directed to serving them. Customer satisfaction is front of mind and they find ways to get close to them.

Taking a broader view of customers to include staff and others who the business depends on to be successful, including suppliers, provides for a wider application of this competence.

Individuals who lack this competence don't go the extra distance to satisfy customers. Unfortunately, we have all experienced extreme indifference at some point from a shop worker. You probably left with the feeling of anger and resentment towards the store and vowed never to visit it again.

Service orientation and farmers

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Service orientation competency of 3.75, which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.000$). Half the population were between a score of 2 (unlikely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 8.

High competence

- Is likely to be a good listener and will probably take the time to find out what others think
- Is quite likely to gain a reasonably good understanding of the customer's needs
- Likes being helpful and seeking ways to make the customer happy
- Prefers to be kept busy; is quite likely to put extra effort into serving customers
- Has a fairly strong need to interact with others; is quite likely to enjoy contact with customers
- Gladly offers helpful personal assistance, showing a genuine interest in the customer.

Low competence

- May fail to gain a good understanding of the customer's needs
- May tend to adopt an overly casual attitude toward service delivery
- May be inclined to deal with the customer in a somewhat disinterested manner
- Prefers to work at a steady pace; may only occasionally put extra effort into serving customers
- May pay very little attention to the finer details of service delivery

- Does not have a strong need to interact with others; may prefer work with less customer contact
- May come across to the customer as disinterested, formal and uncaring.

8.5 Social skills

The last element of Goleman's theory is *social skills*. A person who has these skills is expected to be influential, comfortable with leading change, able to manage conflict and have reasonably good communication skills. In a working environment, effective communication between superiors and their subordinates is vital. Without communication, they are unable to work together to reach their goals.

Being high in this combination of competencies increases an individual's employability and effectiveness in many varied situations. For example, to be an excellent strategic planner as well as cognitive skills you need influencing and political competencies to gain commitment from others.

8.5.1 Developing others competence

People with this competence acknowledge and reward strengths and accomplishments. You will find them offering useful and positive feedback and identify needs for growth and development. They will be skilled at mentoring, coaching and they ensure the team has challenging work to stretch but not overwhelm them. People who are skilled at coaching are likely to rate highly with self-awareness, self-regulation and influence competencies.

There is only one thing worse than only giving negative feedback and that is not giving any feedback at all. But any activity which removes any element of choice from the individual being developed, can be equally destructive. By finding a way to let people design their own ways to improve and, better still, by giving them a problem to solve that they can work on without being told from the outset exactly what the solution is, will build confidence and create good role models for the business. It also allows the leader to delegate and free up time.

Developing others and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Developing others competency of 4.54, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.102$). Half the population were between a score of 4 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

High competence

- Is likely to pick up quite quickly on others' needs and learning style

- Is likely to hold very frequent development discussions with others
- Fully expects to enter into an atmosphere of trust and openness with others
- Is quite likely to take responsibility for developing others
- Shows a strong interest in helping others
- Will strive to work together with others when designing a suitable program.

Low competence

- May have difficulty in fully understanding others' needs and learning style
- May place low priority on finding time for development discussions with others
- May display little interest in others' personal needs
- May not consult others when planning a mentoring program
- May strongly avoid taking responsibility for developing others
- May be unaware of how best to meet others needs for growth and development
- Tends to be very formal and detached when helping others
- May be a little wary about entering into an atmosphere of trust and openness with others.

8.5.2 Leadership competence

People with this competence articulate and arouse a shared vision and mission. They step forward to lead, regardless of position. Employees are held accountable but considerable effort goes into supporting them. More often than not you will find them at the front, leading by example and setting the tone for how things should be done.

Individuals who score low on this competence berate employees, expect them to perform without communicating clearly or by supporting them, and are likely to be more authoritarian and controlling, more aloof and wanting to be in the right.

Leadership is almost all emotional intelligence. It requires self-assessment, self-confidence and commitment. It also needs a good slice of achievement orientation, matched with social competencies like influence, organisational awareness and empathy.

Leadership and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Leadership competency of 4.70, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.293$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 10.

Results from interviews

High competence

- Takes charge of situations but can allow others to take the lead on occasion
- Is very sociable and likely to be popular and 'fun to be with'
- Is fairly strongly inclined to take a long-term view and planning for the future
- Is strongly inclined to involve others in decision making.

Low competence

- Tends to neglect involving others in decision making; may be autocratic
- Has considerable difficulty selling his suggestions to others
- Tends to be more autocratic than democratic in management style
- His serious-mindedness is likely to reduce his ability to inspire the team
- Has considerable difficulty planning for the future and may be too focused on immediate rather than strategic issues
- Feels very uncomfortable when required to take the lead.

8.5.3 Change catalyst competence

Individuals high in this competence recognise the need for change and remove barriers. They challenge the status quo and champion the change that is needed. They are likely to have high levels of self-confidence, influence, organisational awareness, conscientiousness, persistence, adaptability and initiative.

The route to poor change management is to be inflexible, unwilling to be open to new possibilities and lack persistence. In fact, persistence is key, as setbacks are inevitable and failing to get back up and keep trying is a sure-fire way to derail any change initiative.

Change catalysts and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Change catalyst competency of 4.57, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.113$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

Results from interviews

High competence

- Is very understanding of people's probable reaction to change
- Has a need for pace and action in implementing change
- Strongly advocates experimentation with unconventional methods
- Is likely to be a very good role model for others in this domain, given his strong preference for variety over routine
- Likely to be insensitive to criticism of his actions and not easily affected by this
- Challenges the status quo, acknowledging the need for change.

Low competence

- May have some difficulty understanding people's likely reaction to change
- May lack the need for pace and action in implementing change
- Tends to favour the status quo, preferring established methods
- Is strongly inclined to prefer routine over variety and may not typically lead others through change in this regard
- May be overly affected by basic criticism of his actions.

8.5.4 Influence competence

With this competence, an individual can wield effective tactics for persuasion. By so doing, they are better able to win people over, appeal to their needs and build consensus and support. Someone really high on this competence is likely to do something dramatic to make their point. Richard Branson is undoubtedly high in this competence, as we have witnessed over the years through his crazy antics like sky diving and crossing the Atlantic in a hot air balloon.

People who make this competence look easy are effortlessly able to build rapport and create consensus. It is almost the antithesis of a management style built on autocratic and controlling behaviours. Very often it is an over reliance on facts that masks the ability to connect with people on an emotional level.

Influence competence and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Influence competency of 4.59, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.112$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

High competence

- His preference to take responsibility for outcomes may increase his influencing capacity
- Is fairly relaxed and poised on social occasions
- Is quite likely to come across in a lively and animated manner
- Freely expresses own opinions usefully.

Low competence

- May have some difficulty winning people over to his point of view
- May come across as shy and ill at ease on formal occasions
- Does not enjoy the lime-light; may come across as too 'serious', making the audience uncomfortable
- Is reluctant to usefully put forward own opinions
- May have considerable difficulty talking about his past successes and triumphs
- His tendency to avoid responsibility for outcomes may reduce his influencing capacity.

8.5.5 Conflict management competence

People with this competence handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact. They are able to spot conflict, bring disagreements into the open and help to defuse problem situations. They are the sort of people who encourage open debate and aim for win-win situations. Skill at reading a situation and stepping in before it gets out of control, matched with negotiation talent and the openness to deal with a situation creatively are the hallmarks of someone who excels in this competence. At all times they will try to construct a solution so neither side loses face.

Those who resort to threats, being aggressive, losing their cool or taking sides create the perfect recipe for conflict escalation. This competence is rarely found among those lacking self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and empathy.

Conflict management and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Conflict management competency score of 5.10, which is slightly higher than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.635$). Half the population were between a score of 4 (less likely) and 6 (average). The range in scores was between 2 and 9.

High competence

- Rarely reveals his feelings to others when necessary
- Strives to orchestrate win-win solutions
- Encourages debate and open discussion
- Is quite considerate of others' feelings when stating his point of view
- Is generally accommodating of different viewpoints and can usually accept a majority decision.

Low competence

- May state his point of view rather bluntly at times
- Finds it very difficult to compromise and to accept a group decision
- Is not particularly encouraging of debate and open discussion
- May tend to lack discretion at times
- May find it difficult on occasion to conceal his feelings when necessary.

8.5.6 Teamwork and collaboration competence

There is a synergy between building a collaborative workforce and collaborative links vertically and horizontally in a supply chain. Collaboration that draws all members into

active and enthusiastic participation towards the achievement of organisational goals provides the glue to get people co-operating and achieving at their best. Respect and helpfulness are the result of a strong team identity and a strong sense of togetherness. These skills, brought together with careful co-ordination, result in a high performing team. The teams where everyone succeeds or fails together generally perform better than where the team members compete amongst themselves for resources and recognition.

The inability to build and lead a team is brought about through not having a compelling vision of where the organisation is heading. If employees are more passionate about their hobbies than they are for your business this is an indication that their inner fire hasn't been lit. When dealing with the team is like walking on eggshells in order to avoid another "bust up" or bad feelings, the glue to hold everything together is missing. In these teams there is a strong perception of star performers or favourites.

Emotional awareness and emotional management are essential competencies needed to keep on top of the emotional climate that pervades everything that people do and say to one another.

Teamwork and collaboration and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Teamwork and collaboration competency of 4.54, which is slightly less than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.082$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 2 and 8.

High competence

- Places great trust in other people, seeing them as reliable and honest
- Is very likely to identify strongly with the team and to be motivated to protect its reputation
- Has little difficulty meeting deadlines that are set by the team
- Is very helpful towards, and supportive of others in the team
- Is strongly focused on cooperation and dislikes competing with others
- Has little need to promote himself only and is happy to share credit with the team
- Focuses more on cooperation than competition.

Low competence

- May regard many tasks as relatively unimportant, perhaps unknowingly letting the team down
- Is inclined to be detached from others' problems in the team
- A desire to win may reduce a willingness to cooperate
- Mistrusts other people, perhaps seeing them as self-interested and self-serving
- May not identify all that strongly with the team and may be happier contributing as an individual than as a team member.

8.5.7 Building bonds competence

Anyone who can nurture a positive network aligned to the achievement of goals creates a durable advantage in the marketplace. There is definitely a lot of truth in the saying “it’s not what you know but who”. The art of building and nurturing relationships and seeking out people who can support you is vital. This can be more easily achieved where rapport building, information sharing and friendships are cultivated. Building networks eventually pays off when the reservoir of good will and trust can be called on in time of need.

One problem people have is that they are so protective of their own time and agenda they fail to see the benefit of cultivating relationships. Rapport is rarely built easily by people who like the sound of their own voice and who lack empathy.

Building bonds and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Building bonds competency of 3.91, which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.002$). Half the population were between a score of 2 (unlikely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

High competence

- Readily identifies other people's strengths and areas of expertise
- Is good at asking questions and listening actively, in order to get to know people better
- Greatly enjoys contact with others, making it a priority to keep in touch with them
- Is generally quite comfortable meeting new people and building rapport with them.

Low competence

- May have some difficulty using networks for business purposes
- May identify other people's strengths only when there is an immediate need
- May not make an effort to keep in touch with people unless there is a need to
- May have difficulty identifying other people's strengths and areas of expertise
- Feels awkward with strangers and finds it an effort to build rapport with many of them
- May ask people questions and listen to what they are saying only when there is an immediate need to do so.

8.5.8 Communication competence

People with this competence listen well, seek mutual understanding and welcome sharing information fully. They foster open communication and stay receptive to bad information as well as good. The high performing individuals with this skill deal with difficult issues straightforwardly but are careful to include emotional cues in their message. Listening well, the key to empathy, asking open questions, not interrupting and asking for suggestions are all useful tactics to improve performance.

Leaders weak in this area will be slow to praise and quick to criticise. Another feature is the inability to adopt a calm, composed and patient manner. When frustrated, the inability of poor communicators to get their point of view heard will often boil over into angry shouting.

Communication and farmers; Results from analysis

In comparison to the general population, the farmers in our sample had a mean Communication competency of 4.35, which is lower than the comparator population of business managers. The difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.232$). Half the population were between a score of 3 (less likely) and 5 (average). The range in scores was between 1 and 9.

High competence

- Listens well and strongly encourages the sharing of information
- Is fairly talkative and outgoing and should have little difficulty contributing to group discussions
- Listens well and strongly encourages the sharing of information
- Maintains his composure and appears unburdened by his emotions
- Greatly enjoys putting his ideas across in a convincing manner.

Low competence

- Tends to be very selective in consulting others, and may neglect to share information
- Is not particularly comfortable at putting his ideas across in a convincing manner
- Has difficulty relaxing and can come across as impatient
- Tends to be very selective in consulting others, and may neglect to share information
- Is quiet and reserved and may therefore not contribute fully to group discussions
- Tends to talk over people and does not try to listen.

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