



**A Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust**

**Report**

*Award sponsored by*

**The Worshipful Company of Farmers  
and Savills**



**Leading Your Farm to Success**

**Chris Manley**

**April 2024**

**NUFFIELDUK**

## **NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIPS TRUST (UK)**

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**"Leading positive change in agriculture"**

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Nuffield (UK) Farming Scholarships  
Trust Report

Date of report: April 2024



*"Leading positive change in agriculture.  
Inspiring passion and potential in people."*

Title	Leading Your Farm to Success
Scholar	Chris Manley
Sponsor	The Worshipful Company of Farmers and Savills
Objectives of Study Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand what the qualities of a good leader are.</li> <li>• Map out how outstanding leadership can be achieved within an agricultural setting.</li> </ul>
Countries Visited	Netherlands, USA, Brazil, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Rwanda.
Messages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We can learn how to lead agricultural businesses by speaking to others outside of agriculture.</li> <li>2. You can be formally trained in leadership or you can decide to lead based on your own convictions, known as 'leadership without authority'.</li> <li>3. Employees will only reach their potential if they are supported, and you must be willing for them to leave if they develop.</li> <li>4. Neglecting leadership in your community can harbour future problems for farm businesses which may be more significant than you think.</li> <li>5. Knowing yourself is a critical part of improving your own leadership.</li> </ol>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leadership is an area within agriculture which often lacks attention. Despite being natural leaders and innovators, due to the nature of their work many farmers don't fully understand the value that good leadership can have on their business. External pressures continue to mount on rural businesses. Farms are becoming increasingly reliant on a web of other people to create a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector. This report explores what forms leadership can take in farming businesses around the world and examines case studies where farmers have influenced a wide group of stakeholders towards a common aim.

Definitions of leadership were created by speaking to senior members of the UK armed forces. The military places people at the centre of leadership, with a high regard for meeting the needs of soldiers and their families. Referencing the importance of the mission, leaders ensure everyone understands how they can contribute towards collective goals.

There are a number of different ways that people can become leaders within the field of agriculture. In the USA there is a well-developed network of formal agricultural leadership programmes across the different states. In the Netherlands farmers have responded to advancing environmental legislation and created their own political movement for change. 'Grass-roots' leadership is possible within agriculture, where everyone involved in food production can make a contribution. By working with others and exchanging ideas, small ideas can turn into lasting innovations.

Leaders can work with employees to produce farms which become great places to work, like Grupo Morena in Brazil. Looking after all the needs of the people who work for you will result in employees who are committed to, and take pride in, the business they work for.

The importance of expressing leadership within the community was highlighted in Kenya and Rwanda. Farms in these countries had a wide range of initiatives to support the local community and they relied on maximising this soft power to achieve success in the face of wider business uncertainty.

Successful leaders take care of themselves and those around them to create a strong team. Farmers must prioritise their own physical and mental health in order to build resilience. Leaders must be role models for a caring attitude and cultivate a strong support network for themselves and those they work with. Good leadership is characterised by developing self-knowledge, knowing your employees and knowing your community. Profiling of personality traits may be helpful in some of these examples.

*“Leadership is knowing yourself and others, to the point where people are willingly influenced towards a common goal.”*

Farmers need to create and action a stakeholder risk management plan that identifies key people or organisations that impact their business. Farms must aspire to be a great place to work to significantly improve their reputation, employee retention and recruitment prospects. There is a collective responsibility for everyone in the supply chain to take a lead; whether on farm, in a food business or an allied organisation, in order to work together in a mutually beneficial way.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The opinions expressed in this report are my own and not necessarily those of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, or of my sponsor, or of any other sponsoring body.

Please note that the content of this report is up to date and believed to be correct as at the date shown on the front cover.

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## Chapter 1 - Personal Introduction

I am the eldest of two siblings and I grew up in a close farming family, near the village of Hemyock in the heart of the Blackdown Hills in East Devon. While my parents worked long, hard days on the farm, my childhood was spent reaping the rewards of open spaces, a close farming community, and the joys of living life in wellies. Helping around the farm with the sheep, pigs, dairy and beef cattle allowed me to learn the values of a strong work ethic.

I give credit for my development to my involvement with the Young Farmers movement, which I joined aged 15, eventually rising to the position of National Chairman. Young Farmers was also the foundation that led me to securing my degree in Agriculture at Harper Adams University and having the confidence to take a sabbatical year as the elected Student Union President.

I have spent my career working as an agriculture sustainability manager for supermarkets and processors. This has involved providing strategic insight into the sourcing of beef, lamb, poultry meat and dairy, with a focus on managing supply and leading on projects with producers for sustainably progressive farming practices.

When it comes to downtime, I value activities that support my wellbeing. To help others and raise awareness of mental health I have set up a campaign called 'Walk With Me,' which aims to break the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage people to walk and talk.

Thank you to my sponsors The Worshipful Company of Farmers and Savills for the chance to explore my chosen topic of leadership and become a Nuffield Scholar. This is an incredible opportunity to learn and give back to the farming community to ensure it thrives for generations to come.



## Chapter 2 – Background

### **What is the problem and why is it so important?**

The benefits of leadership have been well studied and communicated in the corporate world. However, there has been limited focus in agriculture and food sectors. In the context of growing concerns over global food security little has been invested into the leadership required to transform food systems to deliver the social, economic and environmental sustainability required.

Historically, there were many individual farms, and interpersonal skills were not deemed as relevant. However, at this crucial time, the requirement for farm cooperation and generational change means urgent adoption of leadership skills are required.

The effects of geopolitical change on the UK have been highlighted by Brexit, Covid 19 and rising environmental pressures. Dynamic leadership is required at every level of food production to ensure we turn uncertainty into opportunity. In global agriculture we should no longer accept a reputation for being slow to implement change, with business owners entrenched in day-to-day routines. This must be a priority to make the agriculture sector the most attractive place for a purposeful and rewarding career and an aspiration for all regardless of background.

### **Why do I want to learn more?**

Learning about leadership is a topic I have a particular interest in, working as part of a team to deliver meaningful outcomes and empower others to achieve their full potential. My Nuffield Farming Scholarship provides the time to learn from the best leaders from inside and outside of agriculture and could have significant benefits in helping to lead positive change in the UK. Leadership is needed so everyone working within agriculture feels empowered to take ownership of our collective responsibilities. Decisions are required at all levels to maintain positive momentum in the face of future challenges to the food system.



## Chapter 3 – My Study Tour

Country	Month/Year	Comments
United Kingdom	March to June 2022	Thanks to my sponsor the Worshipful Company of Farmers and their Livery Company network who enabled an incredible opportunity for me to meet with senior leaders from the RAF and Army to learn about leadership outside of agriculture.
Netherlands	May 2022 & June 2023	Independent Travel
California, USA	July 2022	Independent Travel
Brazil	July 2022	Independent Travel
Chile	August 2022	Global Focus Programme
Argentina	August 2022	Global Focus Programme
Washington DC, USA	August 2022	Global Focus Programme
North Carolina, USA	August 2022	Global Focus Programme
Spain	August 2022	Global Focus Programme
Italy	September 2022	Global Focus Programme
Kenya	February 2023	Independent Travel
Zimbabwe	March 2023	Independent Travel
Rwanda	March 2023	Independent Travel
France	May 2023	Independent Travel

For my studies I chose to visit countries which could be considered more developed when it came to agriculture and leadership. The USA was a great place to start and my time in California was highly insightful. I also visited the Netherlands to see how the country is responding to a dramatic change in environmental legislation, initiated by EU policy.

I chose to go to countries where the scale of farms meant that they were critical to the societies they are situated in due to their economic importance and number of employees, such as Brazil and Kenya. I also wanted to go to Zimbabwe, where land reforms and a fragile economy have meant that farmers have had to adapt rapidly to survive. While in East Africa I also heard really exciting things about some of the changes that were happening in Rwanda, so I made time to go there and find out about how this was impacting food and agriculture.

In addition, I took part in a Global Focus Programme study tour visiting Chile, Argentina, Washington DC, North Carolina, USA, Spain and Italy, alongside a separate trip to France with other Nuffield Scholars.

## Chapter 4 – Defining Leadership

Over the course of my study tour I engaged with a wide range of people and asked them what their definition of leadership was.

### 4.1 Military Perspective

I started off by interviewing people outside of agriculture, travelling in the UK to meet with senior leaders in the RAF and the Army to discover their thoughts on leadership. The military is often held up as an exemplar of leadership, with groups of people having to work with discipline and a common purpose in some of the most challenging situations in the world.

I met RAF Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon GCB CBE, who was of the belief that the core of leadership was treating people as human beings. If you just focus on the processes that needed to be achieved, that was simply management he suggested.



4.1.1 Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, GCB, CBE

*“When you treat people as human beings that is leadership, without this it’s just management.”*

Next, I met RAF Group Captain Mark Lorriman-Hughes OBE. A leader’s role is to ‘make decisions and take action according to the best available information at the time’ he explained. When giving a decision it is important to give your reasons for choosing a course of action and it is important that opposing viewpoints have the chance to be heard as part of this process. Being transparent and admitting when you are wrong helps build trust within a team.

The danger of not acknowledging different points of view is that resistance to a decision develops which will have the potential to disrupt the task in hand, said Group Captain Lorriman-Hughes. Once an individual feels that their view has been listened to, they are far more likely to back the leader in their decision.



4.1.2 Group Captain Mark Lorriman-Hughes OBE

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4.1.3 Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC

The final armed forces leader I spoke to was Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC, who was Army Chief of General Staff between 2006-2009. He placed a strong emphasis on character and integrity in a leader. He also discussed the importance of enthusiasm in leadership, which in turn creates enthusiasm among followers. He stressed the importance of having a clear mission so team members have the opportunity to understand the value of their individual actions.

Lord Dannatt mentioned the importance of understanding the type of activity:

1. Strategic – ideas and larger objectives
2. Operations – plan and convert the big idea into practical application
3. Tactical – the things that you need to get done

The military has a wrap-around culture of care, which means that they don't just prioritise the care of the service personnel, but their families and communities as well. If service personnel are being deployed and in stressful situations, it is really important that they have stability at home whenever possible.

## 4.2 Other Definitions of Leadership

I took the opportunity to note some definitions of leadership from some of the people I met on my travels.

*'Leadership is all about having a good team'* said Chris Loxton from Loxton Cellars in California. He placed an emphasis on developing his people and wanted to see the people who worked for him go on to achieve great things in the wider wine business.

*'You're leading by putting other people before you'* said Tiffany Holbrook from Wise Acre Farm in California, *'I want to support my community with healthy food and there is no better way than through farming.'*

John Mwit Kamencu, an agronomist from AgVenture and Centre for Excellence in Crop Rotation in Kenya, told me about how he leads changes in agronomy with farmers. *"Can you perceive where you want to be in the future?"* he said, *"You can then tell people, in their own way of understanding, and give them live examples."*

Peter Muchiri, CEO and Founder of Rockbern Coffee in Kenya, founded his own coffee business, coming from a family of traditional coffee growers. He said *"A good leader is one who leads by example. You need to be able to become a puller not a pusher. You need to be at the forefront, at the tip of the spear."*

Elisa Blanco is a Nuffield scholar and agronomist and water management expert working on irrigation in central Chile. *“Leaders are passionate and community driven,”* she said. *“They have an awareness of a long-term problem that they need to solve,”* she went on, describing how being able to communicate with different people in different ways. Leaders tend to focus on areas where consensus can be found and strengthen them.

Lucie Douma was another Nuffield scholar and Head of Client Strategy and Advice Services at the Farmers Mutual Group from New Zealand who I met during my time in California. She told me *“Leadership is not micromanaging or focusing on day-to-day tasks. Leadership is setting direction and empowering your team to move in that direction. An important characteristic for leaders is to be charismatic to get buy-in from your communities and the people who work for you. Leaders will treat you like a person without a big sense of hierarchy, they can take you along on the journey and inspire you to be the best that you can be.”*

Tom Merwin from California said *“It’s about understanding people. Not just being able to communicate your own position but also to listen to opposing plans.”*

Wilson Odiyo, General Manager, Human Resources for Kakuzi PLC in Kenya, said *“When you have an important task, choose the person with the best skills set, not just the person with the leadership title.”*

These examples show the critical importance of the relationship between the leader and those they are trying to influence.

### **4.3 Defining Leadership – Summary**

- Leadership places people at the centre of decision making.
- Leaders inspire others to act, providing them with a clear mission.
- Leadership is about caring for those that you lead.

## Chapter 5 – Becoming a Leader

There are many different ways that people become leaders. Farmers are practical people and they are used to having to take a lead and improvise in a variety of situations. Some have developed their leadership skills through formal programmes, while others have responded and built their leadership when presented with circumstances they feel strongly about.

### 5.1 Formal Routes - California

I visited Nuffield Scholar Tom Merwin in Clarksburg, California, USA. Tom specialises in viticulture, growing wine grapes and processing them to sell under his own wine brands. Tom is an alumnus of the California Agricultural Leadership Programme.



5.1.1 Tom Merwin, Nuffield Scholar from California, USA

California has a well-established agricultural leadership programme (CALP) which provides development for people who work within agriculture.

The programme offers an intensive 17-month experience for emerging or mid-career agricultural leaders, who learn

from experts and peers at four partner universities. It covers topics such as leadership theory, effective communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and change management among other things. Participants have the opportunity to take part in national and international travel seminars, where they explore complex issues and interact with policy makers. The programme is designed to challenge and transform the people who go on it, with the objective of becoming lifelong learners and catalysts for positive change in their businesses and communities.

It became apparent when I visited North Carolina that most states in the US have a similar sort of provision for agricultural leadership. In the UK there are some leadership programmes, but they seem to be somewhat sporadic compared to the US approach.

In the USA it is seen more as a rite of passage. There is a strong awareness among farmers, who are aware that it is something which can benefit them.



## 5.2 Informal Routes – Zimbabwe

Allan Savory is considered to be one of the founders of what we now define as the regenerative agriculture movement. He developed a concept of Holistic Planned Grazing in the 1960s as a response to increasing desertification and reductions in biodiversity that he was seeing in his native Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He suggested that grazing livestock provide essential nutrient cycling services, which has in turn influenced the regenerative movement's focus on improving soil health, productivity and ecological resilience.



5.2.1 Visiting Allan Savory at the Savory Institute, Zimbabwe

Savory had no formal platform when he developed his ideas, yet his pioneering thoughts in this area are a great example of 'leadership without authority'. Having a clearly defined vision of what idea they want to get across, combined with an engaging persona is all that farmers need to become leaders. Savory's ideas have now spread around the world and have been adopted and developed by other farmers.

Meeting Savory demonstrated that a decentralised leadership style is effective because it encourages experimentation and knowledge-sharing, empowering individuals and communities to make informed decisions that suit their unique situation. Regenerative agriculture's success lies in its ability to foster collaboration and collective action without the need for formal authority, making it a remarkable model of leadership. This can be seen in the significant growth and importance now placed on events such as the Groundswell regenerative agriculture festival in the UK.

A wider trend I saw in some parts of Africa was how people responded to poor leadership from government. There was a high level of entrepreneurship, as people took responsibility for their own situation rather than expecting the government to help and guide them. In this environment informal leadership thrives and I was personally inspired by many of the people I met on my travels through Africa.

### 5.3 Informal Routes – The Netherlands

There is a huge amount of pressure on farmers at the moment in the Netherlands. Debates rage around reductions in livestock numbers as the government tries to bring phosphate and nitrate levels in water under control. The Netherlands are significant producers of livestock products and export much of what they produce similar to Ireland and New Zealand. Strict environmental legislation has been passed mandating a reduction of livestock numbers of 30% by 2030, which some farmers have pointed out is in sharp contrast to the removal of milk quotas in 2015 when farms were being encouraged to invest and expand.

The Dutch farmers I encountered were very solution-orientated when it came to problems, and they have been proactive when it comes to environmental protection for many years. In many respects they are already ahead of where most UK dairy farms are in terms of storing slurry and covering silos, as an example. Against this frustration, farmers felt that they were lacking in representation so they set up their own political party. The Netherlands' political system is different to the UK's, involving a greater range of political parties, but they still managed to get seats in government and now have the ability to influence policy. Rather than waiting for direction from others, farmers took collective action in response to the problem.

### 5.4 Becoming a Leader – Summary

- Farmers should see themselves as leaders within their local or national arena.
- Making connections with others who share your outlook is important to develop your leadership and allow the sharing of ideas.
- There is no one fixed route to leadership. Individual journeys differ depending on the personalities and situations.

## Chapter 6 – Leadership in Action: Employees

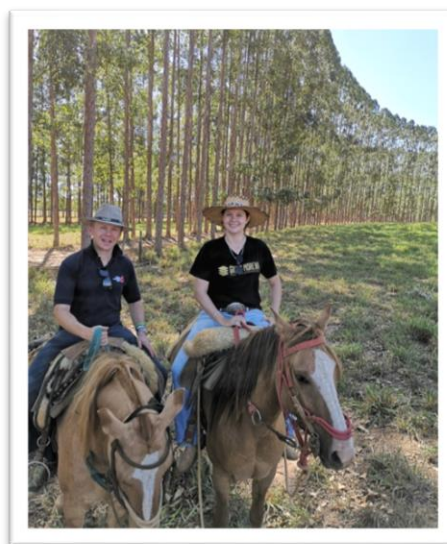
Leadership impacts different stakeholders involved in and around the farm. One of the main groups who benefit from good leadership are the employees of the farming business. In this section I review several farms that I visited where the leadership of employees was outstanding.

### 6.1 Grupo Morena – Brazil

The agricultural sector and its place within the Brazil's economy is markedly different to the situation in the UK. This is not only when it comes to farm size, with Brazilian farms significantly larger than British farms, but also in terms of the huge economic impact they can have on a countryside and the people who work there. Agriculture is certainly higher up the political agenda, and the president at the time, Jair Bolsonaro, attended an agribusiness conference I went to in São Paulo.

I visited Brazilian Nuffield Scholar Vanessa Chiamulera at her family farming business Grupo Morena, a 9,500-hectare farm with arable, beef, forestry and seed processing enterprises, employing 100 people. The family clearly understood the impact that the farm had on the people who work for them. Grupo Morena has been certified as a 'Great Place to Work', demonstrating a consistently good employee experience and high levels of trust and effective leadership. If individuals chose to move out of urban areas and come and work for businesses like Grupo Morena, this could mean a life-changing improvement in circumstances for some people.

One of the clear similarities with the UK was the intense need to attract and retain the right people to work with farming businesses. This means that companies would provide good quality accommodation, transport, clean canteens and nutritious food for their employees. The sense of belonging was something that I don't think I have experienced on a farm before. The employees were passionate and thankful for what the farm had done for them and as a consequence they really took pride in the farm.



*6.1.1 Vanessa Chiamulera, Nuffield Scholar from Brazil*





6.1.2 Grupo Morena Cattle Team



6.1.3 Kaizen 5S Continuous Improvement Model

An example of this was seen when I worked with their farm team putting a large proportion of their 9,000 cattle through a race in one day. At the end of a gruelling and dusty session, they all spent an hour tidying up the handling area. This demonstrated the outstanding level of ownership that employees had in their workplace. This attention to detail and eye for cleanliness was in evidence all around the farm. This sense of pride in the workplace was installed by adopting the Japanese Kaizen 5S Continuous Improvement Model for workplace excellence, shown in the below graphic.

The owners also actively sought to involve employees in the leadership of the farm. Grupo Morena had realised that the people who worked on the farm had a better idea of what was going on a day-to-day basis than the management did, so they created a company competition where employees were invited to submit ideas and innovations which could improve how things were done on the farm. The business committed that they would select and implement a number of these ideas every year, with the people who suggested these ideas rewarded and celebrated.

Not all ideas were purely based on financial reward. One of the recent successful pitches was that the farm should make its own honey, which was distributed to employees on the farm and guests. This stood out as a small idea which created a great sense of community within Grupo Morena.



6.1.4 Grupo Morena Team, Great Place to Work

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## 6.2 Marius and Caro Mertens – Zimbabwe

I visited Marius and Caro Maertens in Zimbabwe, arable farmers who produced tobacco for international markets. The region is known for producing some of the best quality tobacco in the world and it is cured on farm using a drying tunnel which gets up to 70°C.

Marius' view of leading people was that you had to give employees the opportunity to grow in the role and their skills set. This in turn enhances your reputation as an employer who can develop individuals, meaning that motivated prospective employees will seek you out when starting their career.



6.2.1 Marius & Caro Mertens family, Zimbabwe



6.2.2 Tobacco Crop, Zimbabwe

The other thing that struck me about Marius' approach to leading people was that you had to embrace people leaving your business, and actually celebrate the success of an employee who has developed and become ready for a new role outside of the farm. Farm business owners can be protective of their employees, particularly given the challenge of recruiting people with the right skills and attitude. However, embracing this natural cycle of recruitment was actually a strength for the Mertens business, and enhanced their local reputation.

## 6.3 Leadership in Action: Employees – Summary

- Caring for your employees means that they will care about the business they work for.
- Leadership is not about telling people what to do. Good ideas and innovations will come from employees if leaders are willing to listen.
- The right environment will allow people to develop their skills, even if this means they outgrow their current roles.

## Chapter 7 - Leadership in Action: Community

When farms think about leadership, they can have the tendency to only think about things that are directly within the financial control of the business or their direct employees. One of the major learnings for me was the realisation that there is a much wider network of stakeholders who are looking to farms for leadership, and farmers can be powerful leaders in their local communities.

Africa was a place where leadership in the community clearly had a big impact. There are challenging conditions for businesses to operate in, including widespread corruption and tribal politics. People in these regions were clear that they had a duty to engage with their communities and local government, as well as having wider social responsibilities.

### 7.1 Kakuzi PLC – Kenya

Chris and Sarah Flowers run a business called Kakuzi, which is Kenya's largest avocado grower. They employ 3,500 people and also grow a range of crops including macadamia nuts and tea, many of which are exported into the UK and Europe. Kakuzi engages proactively with its wider community through a sophisticated programme of different projects including 600ha of hay which is cut and utilised by local smallholders and creating a market for smallholder avocado producers.



7.1.1 Chris and Sarah Flowers, Kakuzi, Kenya

“Understanding that we are not ‘simply’ a farm is the most important step,” says Chris Flowers. “We must approach our operation with the absolute understanding that we have responsibilities to a much wider group of stakeholders than our employees alone.”

I visited tea plantations in the Nandi hills run by Kakuzi during my travels. Tea picking may be laborious but it also provides essential employment for large numbers of people in Kenya. There is the ability to mechanise elements of tea production, including harvesting, but I found a strong debate over whether this was the right thing to do given the labour that this would displace.

Businesses who employ a lot of people and often have fragile political structures around them are acutely aware of their role and how they can positively or negatively impact on wider society.

Key to the Kakuzi approach is recognising that they have multiple stakeholder groups who have different objectives and different ‘lenses’ with which they will view the farm. These perspectives are mapped and then analysed with what can be credibly responded to, and what is outside the ability of the company. Knowing what is within their sphere of influence, and what is not, is important in tailoring both interventions and responses.





7.1.2 Farm Stakeholder Mapping

All farms need to know which stakeholders influence their business and understand what relationship they have with them. What is the risk factor attached to those different relationships and how do you communicate correctly with them? This got me thinking and after hearing a presentation on supply chain engagement from Caroline Mason, in which stakeholder mapping was demonstrated, I decided to create a working example for a farm in the graphic 7.1.2.

## 7.2 Kisima Farm Ltd – Kenya



7.2.1 Buzz and Becky Robertson Family, Kisima Farm, Kenya

While Kisima is a large farming business, it also provides trial plots for local smallholders to experiment new techniques on. I was lucky enough to attend a workshop which was hosted by Kisima in partnership with AgVenture for the local community on the advantages of different agronomic techniques, where farmers could experiment and discuss their challenges. Creating this time and space for discussing how future agricultural practices could evolve showed an investment in the community of smaller farmers who worked alongside farms like Kisima. While science was being taught to make farming practices more resilient, it was an opportunity for the community to engage and share their views with their larger neighbour.

I visited Buzz Robertson, Farm Manager at Kisima Farms who employ 700 workers on their farm which grows a range of crops. Some of these are cash crops for export, such as flowers, but others are grown purely to provide work and food for the local community, such as potatoes.



7.2.2 Kisima Farm Seed Potato Harvesting

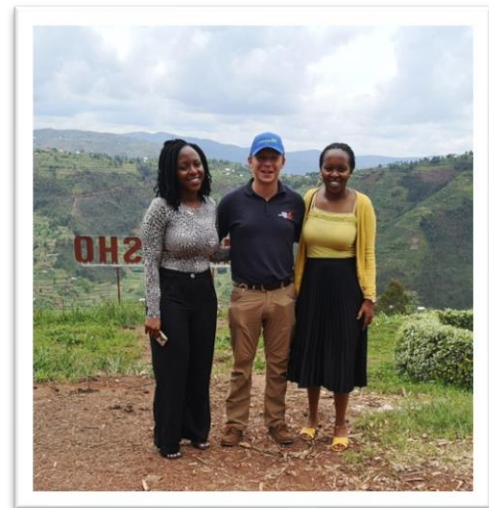
### 7.3 Sina Gerard – Rwanda



7.3.1 Rwanda President Paul Kagame and Sina Gerard

Sina Gerard is a Rwandan business named after its founder, a stall holder who grew fruit and vegetables and decided to start juicing them. He now has a national brand and a business which employs people all over the country and sources from over 3000 small holder farmers. I spent some time with his daughters Julienne and Clarisse Sina to learn about the success of the business. Supporting the community has been an important part of that. They told me he often said *“When you go up, your community has to come up with you. At some point in your life your luck may change and if your community hasn’t come up, you’ve got a long way to fall.”*

Sina Gerard has always prioritised supporting the community in its business, building schools for over 2,000 children and a hospital. They have also provided a lot of training opportunities and even helped employees build houses. I also saw initiatives encouraging people to grow their own fruit and vegetables. While the founder is a successful man, he has done it in a way that has lifted everyone else. In doing this, he has created a brand that is recognisable everywhere in Rwanda.



7.3.2 Julienne and Clarisse Sina, Rwanda

### 7.4 Leadership in Action: Community – Summary

- Poor leadership in the community can sometimes have a devastating impact on farm businesses.
- Stakeholder mapping is a tool which can be used to better understand a business’s impact on the community around it.
- New technology should be appraised regarding how it will impact the needs of employees.
- Businesses can support the needs of the wider community in a variety of ways, providing food, employment and learning opportunities.

## Chapter 8 – Knowing yourself as a leader

Sustainable and resilient leadership requires a degree of self-knowledge and the ability to meet your own needs as well as the needs of the people who depend on you.

### 8.1 Judith de Vors – The Netherlands



Judith has just completed a Nuffield report on how farmers are supported. She claims that support frequently focuses on technical issues while there is rarely attention given to the wellbeing of people working in agriculture. Given the massive changes which had been occurring in the Netherlands with environmental policies, she felt that farmers were under a lot of mental pressure, particularly given that many of them work on their own.

Judith's work shows that farmers need to have an awareness of their own resilience during times of stress, and that taking steps to improve personal mental health is an important part of running a business given the challenges facing agriculture.

*8.1.1 Judith de Vor, Nuffield  
Netherlands Scholar*

### 8.2 Philip Odendaal - Zimbabwe



I met another Nuffield scholar, Philip, when I was in Zimbabwe. He felt that everyone struggles in one form or another with mental health and this was particularly pertinent in agriculture where people can be quite isolated. He felt that people needed to be open to help when they are under pressure, in order to share strategies and experiences for improving resilience.

*8.2.1 Philip Odendaal, Nuffield Zimbabwe*



### 8.3 Mike King – The UK



8.3.1 Visiting Dairy Farmer Mike King, Dairy Herd Manager Lyn Smith & Paul Harris from Real Success with Nuffield Irish Scholar Gill Willis

I facilitated a visit for another Nuffield scholar to visit The Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF) Gold Cup winning Kingspool Holsteins in Gloucestershire. Mike and his brother Chris run the dairy farm and has used Paul Harris with his business 'Real Success' to support the management of their staff and improve their leadership. One useful step has been when Mike was assessed on the Vita Profiling system, which has the ability to establish the behavioural and communication preferences for farmers and the people who work for them. Improving knowledge of himself and his team has allowed them to work more effectively together and deliver a higher level of technical performance.

### 8.4 My own experiences

Learning to understand your own ways of looking at the world have been crucial to me in overcoming depression in recent times and was part of my motivation to pursue an exploration of leadership through Nuffield. Being open to your own thoughts and processes inspired me to start the 'Walk With Me' campaign, encouraging people who work in agriculture to support each other's mental



8.4.1 Walk With Me Mental Health Global Campaign

health by going for walks with peers. By partnering with the Do More Agriculture Foundation in Canada, the campaign had a significant global reach on World Mental Health Day.

### 8.5 Knowing Yourself as a Leader – Summary

- Accepting your own vulnerabilities is a crucial part of being a resilient leader.
- Personal isolation is a challenge for many rural leaders.
- Gaining a formal assessment of your personality can be helpful in learning to work effectively with others and in supporting your own mental health.

*Leading Your Farm to Success by Chris Manley*

A Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust report generously sponsored by The Worshipful Company of Farmers and Savills

## Chapter 9 – Discussion

Agricultural leadership needs further clarification to make it appropriate for the sector. Too many farmers see leadership as something which belongs to the corporate world and not something which applies to how they run their businesses. However, in practice most farmers are extremely enterprising and demonstrate innovation when it comes to running their farms. We need to recognise and celebrate this ‘grass roots’ leadership. Where there are hostilities to farming practices from groups including environmental and animal welfare lobbyists, how will UK farmers respond in a meaningful way? The experiences of the farmers in the Netherlands give some ideas for reflection.

All over the world farmers need to work hard to attract and retain the right employees. Working on farms can be hard and dirty, but farmers also have the opportunity to provide a workplace which is differentiated from the competition. Seeking to provide a wrap-around culture and celebrating employee success is essential to achieving retention and high performance. Allowing employees to drive innovation and take ownership of decision-making allows leadership to flourish at all levels of farming enterprises.

For many farmers, leadership in the community could be limited to a stint as chair of the parish council. Farmers are busy people and may be questioning whether they have the time or the money available to invest in engaging with the community. I would argue that from what I have seen, having a community which is bought into your vision as a farming business is essential. The challenges of local bureaucracy in East Africa made me consider the struggles of UK farmers, who may want to invest in some new infrastructure, such as a slurry store or wind turbine, to make their business more sustainable. If the community isn’t engaged with local farmers and their activities, then opposition to planning and new ways of working can ultimately go on to create existential threats for farming businesses.

It would be hypocritical for farmers to provide a caring environment for their employees and community if they are not able to first apply that care to themselves. Just as it is important for employers to understand the needs of their workers, they also need to understand their own needs and how they can meet them on a regular basis. Looking after your own needs as a leader creates resilience and delivers sustainable leadership, avoiding poor health outcomes such as burnout.



## Chapter 10 – Conclusions

1. Leadership is a term which defines how an individual interacts with others and motivates them towards a common goal.
2. We can learn how to lead agricultural businesses by speaking to others outside of agriculture.
3. You can be formally trained in leadership or you can decide to lead based on your own convictions, known as 'leadership without authority'.
4. Employees will only reach their potential if they are supported, and you must be willing for them to leave if they develop.
5. Neglecting leadership in your community can harbour future problems for farm businesses which may be more significant than you think.
6. Knowing yourself is a critical part of improving your own leadership.

## Chapter 11 - Recommendations

1. Farmers must prioritise their own physical and mental health in order to build resilience. Leaders must role model a caring attitude and cultivate a strong support network for themselves and their team.
2. Farmers need to create and action their own stakeholder risk management plan that identifies key people or organisations that impact their business.
3. Farmers are encouraged to run a personality assessment on themselves, their team and even their family. Use the insights to be more curious, shape ways of working and improve the culture of the business.
4. Farms must aspire to be a great place to work to significantly improve their reputation, employee retention and recruitment prospects.
5. There is collective responsibility for everyone in the supply chain to take a lead; whether on farm, in a food business or an allied organisation, in order to work together in a mutually beneficial way.

## Chapter 12 – After My Nuffield

It is true when they say Nuffield is *‘Leading positive change in agriculture and inspiring passion and potential in people’*.

I am privileged to be part of the Nuffield International family with the most beautiful friends all over the world. I will always believe that there is no better way to learn than to walk in someone else’s shoes, be curious, embrace their culture and challenge my thinking by seeing things from another perspective.

I feel it has been bestowed on me to use this experience to make a positive impact on the lives of the people I meet. My plans for the future include:

1. Take an active role in the agri-food supply chain leading positive change.
2. Champion resilience through promoting positive mental and physical health.
3. Continue the momentum of the ‘Walk With Me’ campaign, to encourage people in global agriculture to connect and have more open and honest conversations.
4. Grow the ‘MenTalk’ pilot, which brings men together to have supportive conversations through purposeful and fun activities, while developing positive male role models.
5. Encourage farmers to develop their leadership skills and aspirations for their farms to be great places to work.

## Chapter 13 – Acknowledgments and Thanks

I would like to thank everyone who has believed in me and allowed me to unleash my potential through a Nuffield scholarship, getting to know myself much better in the process. First and foremost, I would like to show my appreciation and love to my family and friends for being incredibly supportive and my biggest cheerleaders.

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I have formed close relationships with the Nuffield Scholars I have met and have life-long memories, particularly the 2021 and 2022 Scholars and Global Focus Programme group; you cannot beat the supportive culture, with the perfect balance of empathy and encouragement.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Nuffield UK team led by Christoph Graf Grote, Wyn Owen and Mike Vacher in successfully navigating the significant challenge of providing a worthwhile experience for Nuffield Scholars during the Covid19 pandemic. Thank you to the Nuffield International team led by Jodie Redcliffe for opening the door to the Global Focus Programme. It tested me and reshaped my thinking in many ways.

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