



*By Sam Whitelock, Farmstrong ambassador*

Farmstrong's all about the positive things you can do to keep well even when you're under the pump on the farm. Whether you're leading a rugby team or managing land and stock, pressure is pressure. There's a lot to keep on top of when things get busy.

Here's some tips I've learnt in my rugby career. They have helped me manage people and pressure.



## Learn to Delegate

On a farm, it can be tempting to try and do everything yourself especially when you've had systems in place for many years. But that can be a recipe for burn out if the list keeps getting longer, which is no good for either you or the farm.

This year when I took on a team captaincy role I had some really great insights around the benefits of delegation. I learnt to delegate individual jobs to different people to free up my workload so I was also fresh and energetic when I got to the playing field on Saturday.

I found delegating the right task to the right person helped alot. For example give someone a job that works to their strengths, rather than something they are not good at.





## Keep Perspective

Coaching line outs has taught me a lot of about the importance of getting things in perspective. If a line out isn't working, most people will stand really close to it because they are so keen to get involved and fix things. But actually, the best place to stand is 25 metres back. There you can see everything and easily analyse whether it's the throw or the jump that hasn't worked.

It's the same on the farm. If something isn't working take a step back to get a helicopter view. This helps slow things down for a moment to give you time to work out what really needs to happen. It helps put things in perspective and you'll make better decisions as a result.



## Keep your cool

When things aren't going my way as captain, it's tempting to get everyone in the huddle and vent frustration. But that's the worst thing I could do. I've learnt that people can't concentrate if they see me flustered. They won't hear my message at all.

So when you're under the pump on the farm, don't lose your rag. Take a breath, maybe walk to the gate and back and gather your thoughts. Then you can calmly deliver a clear message. I found this helps to build a team that can perform under pressure.



## Stay Connected

How you approach and treat people has a huge impact on whether they hear your message.

Everyone has their own personality. Some people like to be told directly, others like to work it out for themselves. You need to be aware of where people are coming from and manage that relationship.

Small daily connections can really make a big difference. It can be something as simple as saying giddyay each morning that builds that connection. When you have that relationship it becomes a lot easier to have a hard conversation. When you don't, people tend to think "Well, he only talks to me when there's a problem."



## Managing People

Managing people can be challenging but it's an awesome challenge. Rugby has shown me that the way you treat and approach people is critical. Making sure you achieve the right balance in how you communicate and receive information is massive. Get to know your employees and develop a leadership style that's going to work best for you and your team.

There's a ton of videos, stories and ideas on our website [www.farmstrong.co.nz](http://www.farmstrong.co.nz) that farmers have shared about things that have helped them to become a better farmer. So check these out and lock in the things that will work for you in 2018.

Remember, the most important asset on the farm is you the farmer. So learn to share the load and keep Farmstrong. ■■

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