

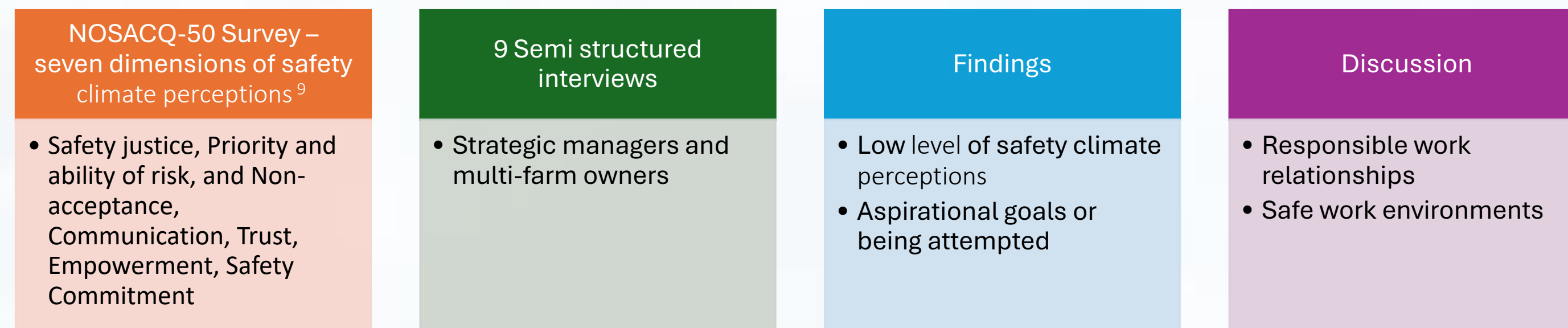
A Safe and Responsible Work Life in NZ Dairy Farming

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A Master of Health Research Pilot: Workplace Health and Safety at Victoria University of Wellington, used the **Nordic Occupational Safety Climate Questionnaire** (Kines, 2011) for the first time in a NZ industry. It was undertaken in dairy milking sheds, and determined the workgroup had low perceptions of safety. It followed with interviews of owner/managers, answering safety-based questions from domains of the NOSACQ-50. **The findings and discussion formed the basis for PhD research.**

Dairy farming in New Zealand (NZ)

- Trading up \$709m in 2020 from 2019 (NZIER, 2020).
- Predicted to generate **\$28 billion** of export revenue annually **by 2027**.
- Significantly influenced NZ culture and approach to rural life.



Safety Climate – is a measurement of the relative importance of a workgroup perceptions of safety & behaviour, related to the policies, practices and procedures of that workplace. NOSACQ-50 survey is also able to predict safety motivation, perceived safety level, and self-rated safety behavior. (Zohar, Kines)

Champion for PhD Research

“To explore the intersection of employment relations and safety climate of dairy farm assistants on NZ dairy farms.”

Literature Review

Pilot research into the safety climate, gives rise to examining safety in this work environment and the employment relationships in the dairy industry in NZ.

The occupation of dairy farming is a culmination of systems with an evolved culture;

- people are generally working alone in isolated rural areas with distant communication
- outcomes of relational power in organizational safety (Dekker & Nyce, 2014) in thousands of small business dairy farms in NZ, is indeterminable.
- Safety climate offers an opportunity to reflect employee’s perceptions of safety, and the importance of safe conduct of behaviour in the workplace (Zohar, 1980).
- Edwards & Kuhn-Sherlock survey of injury in the NZ dairy milking shed in 2021, showed **dairy farm assistants** were most commonly injured (29%), nearly twice that of other manager and owner roles.

The dairy farm in NZ has evolved into a complex hierarchical workplace;

- intergenerational or family systems of beliefs, norms, and values on farms (Shortall, 2019).
- dairy farms have long working hours, barriers to safety - being rushed, being in a hurry and fatigue (Lovelock, 2009; Morgaine, 2014).
- Individual safe behaviour at their discretion in a safe working environment (Blau, 2017)
- lacking research of relationship of productivity versus safe behaviour (DairyNZ, 2023)
- health & safety and employment relations literature up to 2014 (Anderson, 2014).

Research Gap and Methodology

Gaps were highlighted in pilot study;

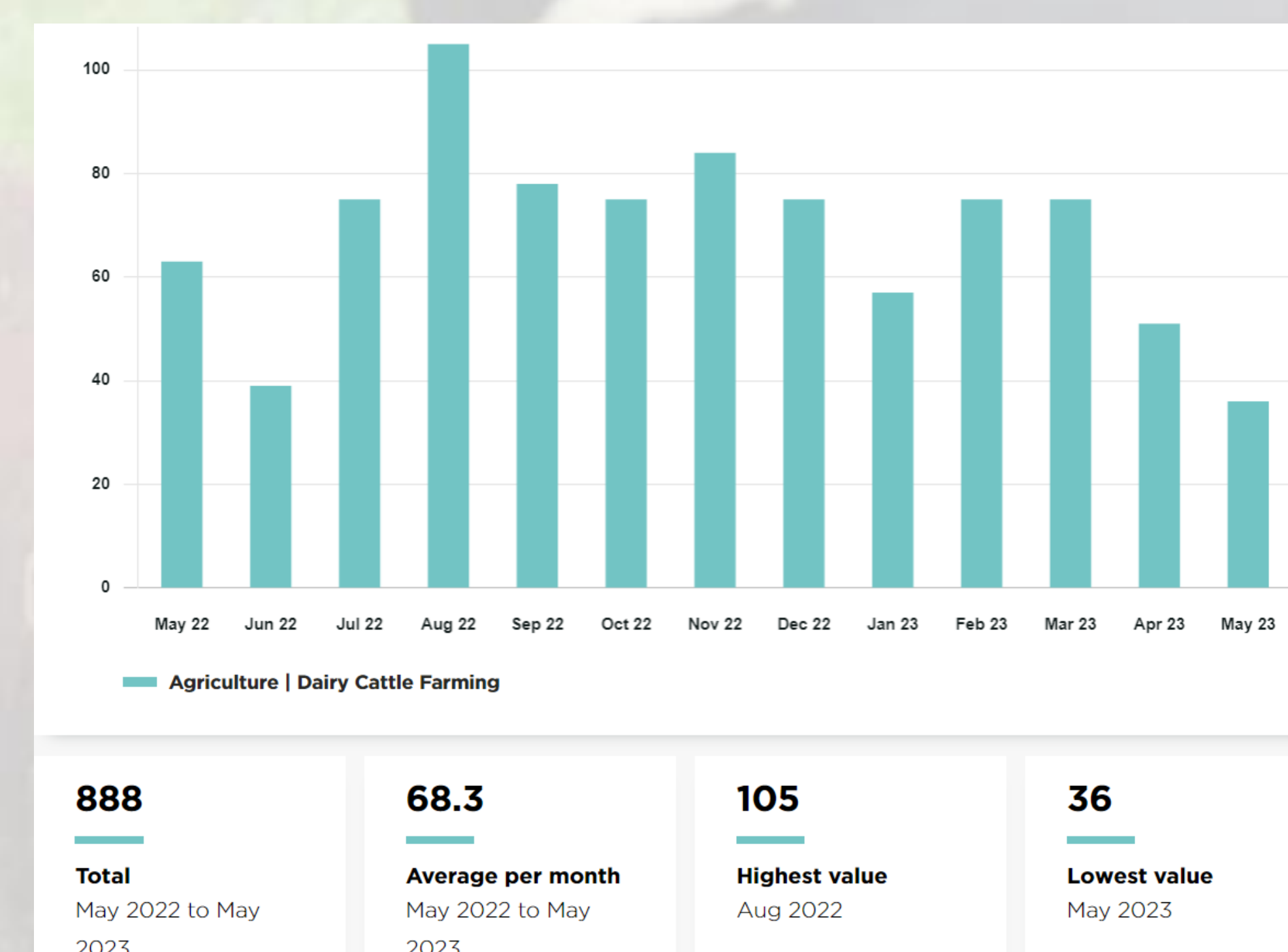
- 1) inequality in the work relationships.
- 2) a need for responsible communication and trust.
- 3) a mutual need to succeed for employers and employees in a safe work environment.

PhD will explore the intersection of work relationships and safety climate of dairy farm workers, using a pragmatic abductive approach.



Methods & Flyer

Injuries resulting in more than a week away from work from May 2022 to May 2023



Worksafe; <https://data.worksafe.govt.nz/graph/detail/injuries>

The Safe Dairy Work Researcher

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Expected Outcomes & Contributions

A responsible work relationship framework¹⁰ and tool
• Locally tested

An integrated research community including
• AI
• Employment Relations
• Safety Climate
• Dairy Industry

Safety AI App Tool
A safe work environment measure

A Workers' Collective¹⁵

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