



Awaiti Farm

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Conall and Rowena Buchanans farm is located near Paeroa. They used 50/50 sharemilking to reach farm ownership and have 1150 cows over 2 operations in New Zealand and farming interests in Chile. They are very experienced farmers and have spent 3 years in Chile where they started and developed a multi farm dairy operation.

Historically they were milking through:

- A 20 Aside Herringbone – 280 cows in the last year.
- About 2 hours to milk and clean up
- An old (extended) 26 Bail rotary – 280 cows in the last year.
- About 2.5 hours to milk and clean up

Objectives

Having purchased a neighbouring farm 5 years ago, Conall and Rowena wanted to amalgamate the 2 farms.

They also felt that having modern, high functioning and attractive infrastructure would help with attracting and retaining good team members.

Taking on an additional adjacent lease block would place additional demand on the 2 aging diaries and they wanted to achieve better long term productivity.

Challenges

Price was a consideration and it was important to Conall that they experienced good communication prior to and throughout the project.

It was important to Conall and Rowena that they could work hand-in-hand with the builder to plan out the best site and positioning of the shed (and pond) on the farm.

Little wasted space and build quality were prerequisites.

Ensuring that the design enabled the cows to flow through well was vital.

Conall and Rowena also wanted the option of 1 person being able to milk all of the cows as this has big advantages later in the season, or on the weekends.

Solution

We worked closely with Conall and Rowena to design and then build a 54 bail Don Chapman Rotary.

- The team are now milking 620 cows running as 2 herds in less than 2 hours, then clean up (clean-up is quicker than in either of the old sheds).
- Cows flow through the shed well. The Shed operation is calm, steady and no fuss for the cows.
- Working conditions for team members has dramatically improved with a much more attractive, modern place for all to work.
- The new shed has removed the time and costs that Conall & Rowena were continually experiencing with minor repairs and upgrades required to the old sheds.
- Cooling, effluent and general facility requirements are all up to spec or exceeded.
- Electronic drafting and the dung buster are everyday positives that they did not have before.
- AB facilities are appreciated by the technicians and truck loading that is easy for drivers.