



LESS TIME
IN THE SHED
INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY

JACK SYMES
DUNSANDEL, CANTERBURY

PROJECT SPECS

54 Bail Orbit Concrete Rotary | 640 Cows | Commissioned 2022

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS: Multi-Service Gland, ECR-S, SmartSPRAY, Cow Restraints
AUTHORISED WAIKATO MILKING SYSTEMS DEALER: Morrison Agri Ashburton

How NZ Dairy Manager of the Year reduced labour costs.

2023 National Dairy Industry Awards Manager of the Year Jack Symes manages a 640 cow family farm in Dunsandel, Canterbury.

Heading into his third season at the farm, but first as manager, the 25 year old and parents Brian and Judy Symes had decided to upgrade their milking system and began shopping around to see what was available.

“What stood out for us was the uniqueness of Waikato Milking Systems and how smooth they ran when we went around those sheds, compared to others.” says Jack.

The Symes had been running a 30 aside herringbone

in a 30-year-old shed and settled on a Waikato Milking Systems 54 Bail Orbit Concrete Rotary Parlour with Multi-Service Gland, ECR-S Automatic Cup Removers, SmartSPRAY In-Bail Automatic Teat Sprayers and Cow Restraints.

One of the main things the Symes were looking to achieve was an increase in productivity by reducing milking time. “In the old shed we could be milking for 7 - 8 hours. Now we’re running between 5 - 5.5 hours.”

“We also wanted to get away with not having to have two people in the shed, now we just have one person which allows us to have another person outside doing other jobs. So the pressure isn’t on us



during the day when we’ve finished the first milking to get our jobs done before the afternoon milking.” says Jack.

“When you compare our old system, which was very labour intensive and required each staff member to work two milkings per day, now they just milk once a day. Working hours have decreased as well, so it’s made us a very attractive workplace.”

As well as reducing labour costs Jack has also seen an increase in milk production "I suppose there's a range of things that helped things this year, but our milk production is up 7% up on the previous season."

"Our cows are now only spending 1.5 - 2 hours on concrete waiting to be milked and then they're straight back out in the paddock grazing or sitting down, so yeah, there's an increase in production and we're looking for a decrease in lameness as well, as the cows aren't standing and walking as much there's more time in the paddock to eat and rest."

The one component that really stood out for Jack was the SmartSPRAY In-Bail Automatic Teat Sprayer. "That has gotten a big tick of approval, having dropped our Somatic Cell Count down considerably. During peak we're operating at around 70,000, compared to 120,000 - 130,000 in the old shed. It has the auto mixer as well, that makes sure that you're getting the correct application every time the cups comes off the cow."

Jack is seeing improvements in udder health too. "The way the 320 Cluster sits on the cow is very good, instead of having the drop hoses in the bail, we've got the air lines and the milk tubes all connected as one to the cluster. They go around to the udder and sit there very nicely. And then we have had the ECR-S

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Automatic Cup Removers set to the milk flow that we want, so we haven't had any problems with teat damage or over milking."

Waikato Milking Systems Rep Gary Ballantyne says "it was one of the first sheds that we put the new Multi Service Gland in, nothing overhead, everything coming underneath. So it was perfect."

When asked about how long it took for his cows to adjust Jack said "We'd heard mixed reports on cows adjusting to the new rotary system, some were saying to us that we'll be pushing cows on for weeks. But the heifers went straight on with no problems because they didn't know any different, so that was really good. And we calved our heifers a week earlier than our cows, so they were sort of teaching the cows what to do."

On the installation Jack says "The team at Morrison Agri down in Ashburton are great, they installed the whole plant for us and still to this day continue to be very helpful. We didn't have one problem, they made sure everything was installed and up to standard when the first cups were ready, and they continue that support to this day."

On whether he might add more components in future Jack said "after having had a season in there and looking at what could be done a wee bit better, I would add the automatic SmartWASH system. Then you'd get away from having to go back and forth between the hot water cylinders and wash down area to change taps all the time."

Jack says "I will definitely be recommending Waikato Milking Systems to other farmers. Being innovators at the cutting edge of milking technology means the constant technology upgrades that Waikato has to offer, for us, keeps it in front of the competition." Jack Symes.

