



PROJECT PROFILE



Greenmeadows Farm

The Eastern Bay floods of 2004 could have been a blessing in disguise for Bernie and Faye Clark of Waimana.

Back then the couple had plans of replacing their old 18-a-side herringbone dairy parlour with a larger parlour with the same layout.

"The 2004 flood kicked me sideways. Otherwise we would have had a 40-a-side herringbone sitting down there now, and with the extra land we've bought and the intensification I'm planning it would've been too small," says Bernie.

Instead they now have a 50 bail rotary, and within three milkings had already reduced milking times from three and a half hours down to an hour and a half.

Bernie has been dairying all his life. This is their fourth season on Greenmeadows Farm, a 165 hectare property running 430 cows. Their production target for this year is 145,000kg/MS.

The family used to own the property next door and they have pieced together Greenmeadows by merging separate farms as they came up for sale.

"There are about 120 paddocks now. Twenty years ago there were four dairy farms here."



Farm Stats

Farm Owner: Bernie & Faye Clark

Size: 165 hectares

Location: Waimana, Bay of Plenty, North Island, New Zealand

Number of Cows: 430

Farming Type: Pasture Based

System Design referred to in this Profile

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Farm amalgamation, increased cow numbers and the installation of rotary parlours is a growing trend in the region.

For the Clarks there were many reasons to build a new dairy parlour. The old 18-a-side herringbone had already had a few past lives, starting out as a walk-through and later being converted to a herringbone.

"It had been extended at least three times," says Bernie.

Plans to increase cow numbers up to 500 meant a larger parlour was necessary to cope with the expansion. This was the main reason they chose a 50 bail rotary.

"People could argue the parlour is too big for the farm but for most farms the thing that holds production back is the size of the parlour and long milking times.

Eventually we hope to get a feed pad and ramp the numbers up even more. Ninety per cent of the farm is floodable, so a feed pad will be really useful."

Bernie is also employing more staff so he no longer has to milk. He knows that in today's tight labour market having a nice new parlour is a great drawcard for potential employees.



Even the sharemilker here said "you'll have people lining up when they see this thing."

The new parlour has good cow flow and uses up-to-date technology. It can be operated by a single person but Bernie says for the foreseeable future there will always be two people because they are running a two herd system. He currently employs two farm workers.

"Ideally it could run with a good husband and wife team with hired staff until the end of the seasonal breeding program. Eventually from December one person can milk on their own."

It controls the milking process from the moment the operator applies the cluster until the end of the milking process, and the milking cluster removal, along with the bail restraint.

Once the cow restraint comes off, the cups drop below the platform bridge so the cows don't get caught up in the cups and cause damage. A remote button for activating the cup removers is located on the platform fascia below where the cows stand.



The Clarks chose to install INTELSCAN PLUS. This system has many new and advanced features, including milk yield and flow display, sophisticated pulsation programmes with automatic stimulation, flow controlled pulsation, automatic cluster removal, kick-off and low milk alerts, remote control programming, simple single push-button operation, and more.

The parlour has a unique automated platform washing system which can stop in any position because it has a water gland connected to the main rotary gland.

The Clarks chose an iFLOW rotary platform, which features more than one roller per cow to help the platform move smoothly and reliability for years to come. "Two hydraulic motors drive the platform so if the power stops, you can connect it to your tractor and get the cows off easily."

The Clarks' parlour features a rectangular yard with a dump-wash system and gravity drainage. Washing the yard is achieved instantly.

Because the new parlour has been built beside the old one, the Clarks have been able to use their existing effluent disposal unit, saving them money.

"I've been impressed with the way the parlour has worked" Bernie says.

"The first milking we had to push the cows on because everything was new. It only took a few days for the cows to learn the system."

Long term Bernie has plans for a new water and race system and altered paddock sizes. He hopes that one of their five children will want to take over the property eventually.

