



PROJECT PROFILE



John & Christine Lambert

John and Christine Lambert are the owners of an intensive farming operation at Waharoa, 15 minutes north of Matamata. The operation is intensive by New Zealand standards with 430 cows being fed a partial mixed ration diet that includes 750-800 tonnes dry matter in the form of fine chopped maize for silage. This is trucked in from local growers. Other bulk products include brewer's grain, palm kernel, soy meal and seasonal products including corn starch, kiwifruit and squash. They also buy in 160-200 tonnes of grass silage. Lime flour and magnesium are added to the feed when needed. From the local Open Country Cheese factory they source Proliq, a by-product of cheese making. 'This is mixed in with the feed and is high in sugar, 18-20% Dry Matter and containing 13.5% Metabolised Energy.'

It was only a few years earlier, things were much different. Faced with the decision of selling up and moving on or redeveloping the farm and increasing production, they chose to stay.

The transformation in a short time has been amazing and a credit to their commitment to turn the business into a highly productive unit.

The redevelopment consisted of a series of very smart and decisive business decisions. To start with they bought the farm running the length of their eastern boundary, giving them 84ha (effective) to be run as one farm. They also built a new milking parlour with a 44-point iFLOW platform with iCONVEYER milking system. The parlour is on a new site central to the combined farms.



Farm Stats

Farm Owner: John & Christine Lambert

Size: 84 hectares

Location: Waharoa, Waikato, North Island, New Zealand

Number of Cows: 430

Farming Type: Partial Mixed Ration

System Design referred to in this Profile

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Adjacent to the milking parlour a feed pad was constructed, 100m long x 18m wide with two rows of bins 78m long. The area holds 450 cows. 'Our farm can get wet through winter and early spring so we have built a standoff pad as well,' Lambert says. This is parallel to the feed pad and is 100m long x 30m wide, holding 450 cows with 6sq.m per cow. Cows can easily transfer between feed pad, milking parlour and stand off area. The base of the standoff area is metal, lime and sand capped with 500mm of post peelings. The surface is concave to aid rain runoff. After several weeks of use 100mm of hardened top crust is removed. Gardeners love it.

The feed mixing and storage area has been retained, about 400m from the new feed pad, with another concrete bunker for storing maize; a burnt lime pad is also available for storing maize.

They bought a Strautmann Verti-Mix 2000 feed mixer wagon. The farm makes no silage or hay and all feed is bought in as well as other supplements and minerals. 'The farm land is too valuable to grow crops and is purely a milking platform.'



With such an intensive farming system they wanted technology which could help them grow their business. They settled on a complete INTELSCAN automation package with computerised iDATAFLOW herd management system. The system includes milk metering, conductivity, in parlour alert system, automated sorting and weighing. Perhaps the jewel in the automation package is the HR-Collars fitted to the cows. The collars monitor activity and rumination of the cow and report on cows that are on-heat or are sick for example.



The rumination data is used to check the balance of the diet. With such a intensive feeding regime it is easy to get the mix wrong and this is normally only reflected in the milk level in the bulk tank. With the iDATAFLOW system the rumination time can be viewed at the end of each milking.

John says the technology has transformed their business and the results are impressive. Production for the coming season is expected to be 220,000kg of milk solids. This equates to 510kg of milk solids per cow, or more than 2600kg of milk solids per hectare.

"This is just the start" says John. "With new tools we can refine our business in new and exciting ways, we can make better decisions, faster, and we know exactly where we are going in our business".

