



GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATION

EXTRAORDINARY SOMATIC CELL COUNTS AN AWARD WINNER

A season average bulk somatic cell count of 75,000 would be good for any dairy farm, but for a first-year conversion it's extraordinary – and testament to the DTS Herd-Man dairy automation system.

When Graham and Jane Thomas converted an Ashburton farm to dairy five years ago, they went with Herd-Man to help things go smoothly. "Our farm adviser said anything that would help with mastitis detection was worth trying," recalls Graham. "We were launching into something completely new, so it seemed a good idea."

Indeed, it worked so well that last year when they converted a second farm, 239 ha Grajan milking 955 cows, they went with Herd-Man again for the 60-bail rotary shed.

Grajan manager Richard Pearse had no previous experience of working with automation in a shed, "except for a teat sprayer." A year down the track and Herd-Man is helping him keep excellent control of mastitis, as well as making animal management tasks more efficient.

The very low somatic cell count speaks for itself, says Richard, who with his partner Susan Geddes recently won the Dairy Farm Manager of the Year award. "We were over the moon about that. The best I've had before that was 120,000."

Based on information collected by Herd-Man's In-line Sensor system each milking, the system identifies a group



Farm manager Richard Pearse

of cows to keep a closer eye on. "We can set an alert for those cows, which comes up on the screen at cups on, so they get stripped out every milking." The targeting makes their job more efficient, he says, and it helps with early mastitis detection so they treat more quickly.

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The Herd-Man Feed Control system enables them to control feeding of grain, to feed to a cow's production or condition, and ensure no cow is

GRAJAN

Graham & Jane Thomas (owners)

Richard Pearse (farm manager)



Location: Hinds, Canterbury [60-bail rotary]

Stock numbers: 955 cows

Farm size: 239 ha

DTS Herd-Man system: Auto Drafting / In-bail Identification / Feed Control / In-line Sensors / Large Display Screen / Pullcord + Keypad

overfed. The Keypad helps set up automatic drafting for any purpose "nice and easily".

When it came to the end of the season, Richard found the Herd-Man Online Herd Management tool very useful to help manage moving the cows to once-a-day milking and then drying off. "It provides good information."

Richard says he is looking forward to seeing what else Herd-Man can help him do. "It has already made life so much easier."

For the coming season they've added a screen at cups off, so treatments can be recorded as they're done, and drafting – for example for mating – can be guided by downloading MINDA records. "The information is all right there, in real time."