



Farming 53,000 cows the American Way

By Clint Humphrey - FiL Area Manager, Southern North Island

One of the upsides to providing Kiwi farmers with high quality products is that dairy farmers elsewhere also want a piece of the action!

The USA is one of FiL's 15 export destinations accounting for 58% of the company's annual exports. Earlier this year, Southern North Island Area Manager Clint Humphrey, visited California and Oregon to represent FiL at the Tulare World Ag Expo and talk to some USA dairy farmers on-farm.

The first thing that hits you is enormity of scale - everything is on a far larger scale to what you could imagine.

Farms are called ranches, yards are called corrals and utes are called pick-ups and they are big! Even the small (as considered by the Americans) 4x4 Hilux has the option of a V8 motor.

Another striking difference between the farms and a New Zealand dairy farm is that no grass grows wild on the roadside. I was reminded of the Desert Road, north of Waiouru, with tussock, tumble weed and visible bare dirt. This is because the area is actually classified as a desert. It has very low rainfall and areas such as Oregon also get snow in the winter.



Colombia River Dairies in Oregon is probably one of the largest dairy farms in the world with 53,000 cows on the feedlot. Separated into three main milking herds, the cows are milked in three parlours each fitted with two

New Zealand built rotary platforms rotating in opposite directions. The parlour for the Jersey herds has two 80 bale rotaries while the other two for the Holstein Friesians each has two 72 bale units. At any one time 448 cows are being milked in the three sheds.

Each of the parlours has fully covered lanes in opposite directions leading to barns, approximately 1km long and each of the 12 barns houses more than 2000 cows so well over 20,000 milking cows are inside during winter.

Outside winter months, the number of cows milked can be increased as the ranch has a number of other smaller barns that at the time of my visit housed the hospital herd and dry cows.

Steers and calves are included on the total feedlot but are raised in separate uncovered areas on the ranch. The calf rearing unit comprised 4500 animals on milk replacer.



Each of the 12 barns is approximately 1km long and houses more than 2000 cows.

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The Moon and the Weather

Meteorologists aren't the only people trained to predict the weather. Ken Ring is this country's only long range (months, years, even decades) weather forecaster.

Using the phases of the moon he claims he can determine weather infinitely ahead. Although this is a method he stumbled on nearly 30 years ago, he thinks it is probably thousands of years old and may have been known by the builders of Stonehenge.

He says the Moon controls the weather and the reason mainstream science fails to recognise this fact is the same as why folk medicine is no longer embraced. It's not that the old doesn't work, it has just been superseded by modern times.

Ring believes there is much more to the moon than its monthly cycle and each aspect of its ever-changing orbit has a different effect on our atmosphere.

For instance, new moons in summer coupled with perigees can bring destruction with most rain coming overnight. In winter full moons do the damage. A

with it and causes the air level above horizon to lose height. As the cold of space and the heat of the sun are kept away from earth by the presence of atmosphere, a lower atmosphere means the cold of space can come closer to ground level and clouds will then condense.

In a clear summer sky with no atmospheric protection, the sun's rays can hit us more severely. That's why full moon/last quarter is the burn time in summer. There are monthly changes that determine which day(s) rain will occur. The moon goes north or south throughout each month, the 27.3-day declination cycle.

Visibly, declinations are how far north or south along the eastern horizon the moon can be seen to rise. When the moon turns at the southern limit to again head northward, by gravitational pull it tends to drag cooler air up from the poles and over southern districts, generating southerlies.

Winter snow-dumps in Otago and Canterbury occur at or near each month's southern declination day. This winter those days will be June 5, July 2, August 26 and September 22.

So what's happening over the next few months and beyond?

Winter should be drier for the first half, then wetter for most areas in August. Most areas will be warmer than average. Exceptions will be Nelson and Lake Tekapo on cooler temperatures.

We will have some cold spells from the second week of June through to the first week of July and there should be another cold spell in the week of the end of August/beginning of September, then it won't be really colder again till the last week in September.

August will be the wettest month with July a close second, especially the first week in July in the lower North Island - yes, again! Then September will see average rain while October, November and December will generally be drier. Spring 2004 will be drier than average, also bringing cooler temperatures.

Overall, 2004 will be looked on as a wetter than average year with the second half receiving less rain than the first. Next summer will be warmer and drier with January being especially dry in the north.

Long term, we are likely to witness droughts 2005-2007. These will probably be in the Bay of Plenty in 2005, Canterbury in 2006 and Timaru southward for the first part of 2007. We should see milder winters for a while, returning to more extreme winters around 2014-2016.

FiL's \$5000 Donation to Flood Relief Fund

When FiL donated \$5000 to the Manawatu flood relief fund it was one of the first companies to come to the aid of stricken farmers.

General Manager Gavin Cherrie contacted Federated Farmers' national office a day before the organisation launched its appeal and confirmed the donation - no strings attached.

"FiL has been part of the rural community for nearly 30 years and during this time we have experienced growing support for our products and services particularly among dairy farmers but also in the areas of beef, deer, sheep, horticulture and forestry. We therefore consider it appropriate to show these farmers the same support they have afforded us during what is a very difficult time for them," he said.

"But where others have attached conditions to their donation, usually based on sales, we decided ours would be a straight donation and the cheque was paid out immediately, before the appeal even started," Gavin Cherrie added.



first quarter moon brings morning rain and in the last quarter, rain will be mainly in the afternoon and evening.

Rain most often occurs at moonrise, moonset, or when it is directly beneath our feet on the opposite side of the earth. In summer if rain is absent, substitute extra heat from the Sun.

Either rain or extra sun - what's going on? The reason is the tide of the air. Just like the sea tide, the moon exerts a pull on the five thousand million million tons of gas above our heads that we call the atmosphere. As the earth rotates every 24 hours beneath the moon, a constant bulge of air sits beneath the moon and rotates with it.

When the Moon rises, the atmosphere gets stretched to higher levels. The setting Moon takes the air bulge

The Wairarapa storm of February 16 occurred the day before the southern declination and on the exact night of the perigee. Perigee is when the moon comes closest each month to earth and it usually brings trouble. Just about every tropical cyclone you can name - Tracy, Cora, Dreana, Bola etc - occurred on or just after perigee and just after the full moon/last quarter period.

Perigees have a cycle of their own too, unrelated to declination or phases. They click around monthly, changing hemispheres about every four years and have been in our hemisphere since April 2003 and it is now our hemisphere's turn for seasonal rough weather for a few years.

Weather warnings, now and later, for farmers

Our next lot of perigee and southern declination dates coincide on June 3 and July 1 this year and again on May 26 and June 23 in 2005. Put a ring around those dates. Will we get destructive weather then? Nothing is more certain.

Performance of Calves Fed Diamond V XP Yeast Culture

Calves fed with Diamond V XP yeast culture in a concentrate gained 11.3% more weight in the first 71 days of life than those fed extruded cottonseed, according to a recent trial in Canterbury.

Forty-eight mixed breed calves aged seven to 10 days were chosen randomly from a herd of 800 then split into herds of 24 and held 12 to a pen. They were fed colostrum and milk before the trial started.

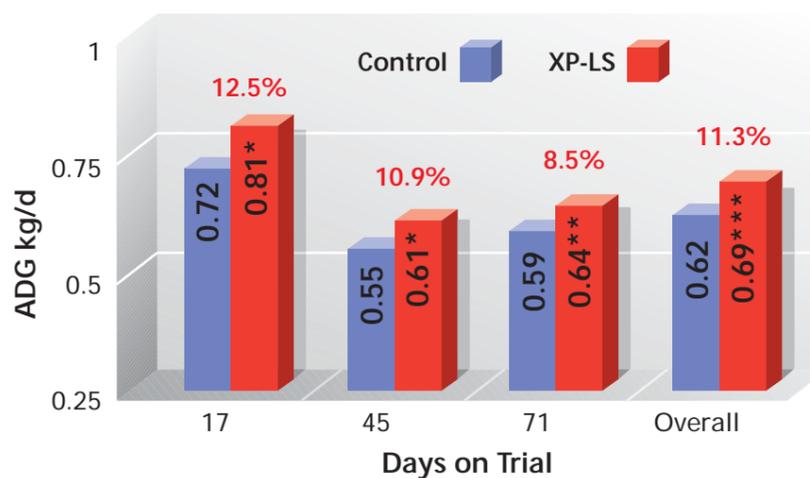
All the calves were fed a milk replacer for 45 days at 1.5 litres/day then, as intake of concentrate meal was increased to 550g/calf/day, milk powder rations were reduced to once a day.

The two groups then received meal,

plus either 100kg/tonne of extruded cottonseed, or 12kg/tonne of Diamond V XP. All animals were allowed free access to the concentrate, straw and water and none of them suffered health problems.

They were weighed at the start of the experiment and at 17, 45 and 71 days. While the Diamond V XP calves were slightly heavier on average at the start of the trial, as it progressed, they gained weight faster than those on cottonseed.

The trial proved that feeding 1.2% Diamond V XP in a calf concentrate improved average daily weight gain by 11.3% compared to extruded cottonseed and the improvement was consistent through weaning and into ruminant phase at 71 days.



Within days on trial * (P<0.1), ** (P<0.05), *** (P<0.01)

Values in red represent XP-LS improvement over control in percent.

Jonnesse and Cherrie. 2003.

Farming 53,000 cows the American Way

Continued from page 1...

They each have their own individual huts and it looked like rows of 4500 large fibreglass dog kennels.

The remainder of the ranch is surrounded by very basic fencing as animals don't graze the pasture. Irrigation is vital so on a clear day there are dozens of large centre pivot irrigators for as far as the eye can see.

The animals are fed mostly hay and lucerne (alfalfa) which is mixed with grains, corn, almond waste and cottonseed imported from Australia. Cotton feed is especially interesting as once the cotton is removed from the seed, the left over split seed is a very sugary, high protein feed which cows almost fight over!

Staff meetings are generally conducted in Spanish because most of the staff are Mexican, who either cannot, or will not, speak English.

It seemed normal for there to be more Mexicans than Americans on many of the farms I visited despite the fact they are more than 2000km from Mexico. There was a significant upside to this though as it meant lots of good Mexican restaurants in the towns! All milk produced at Columbia River Dairies is trucked to Colombia River Processing, a dairy company about 20km away that manufactures cheese. Winter production was over 590,000kg with the Holstein Friesians averaging 32.7 litres and the Jerseys 22.7 litres a day.

American dairy farmers are paid using a fairly

antiquated system as historically the majority of milk produced has been used for fluid. At the time of my visit the rate was just under \$12 per 100 weight (equivalent to NZ38cents/litre) for one hundred pounds of fluid milk adjusted to a 3.5% milkfat (Holstein milk). Historically, adjustments were only made for fat, but now adjustments for protein have been introduced as well.

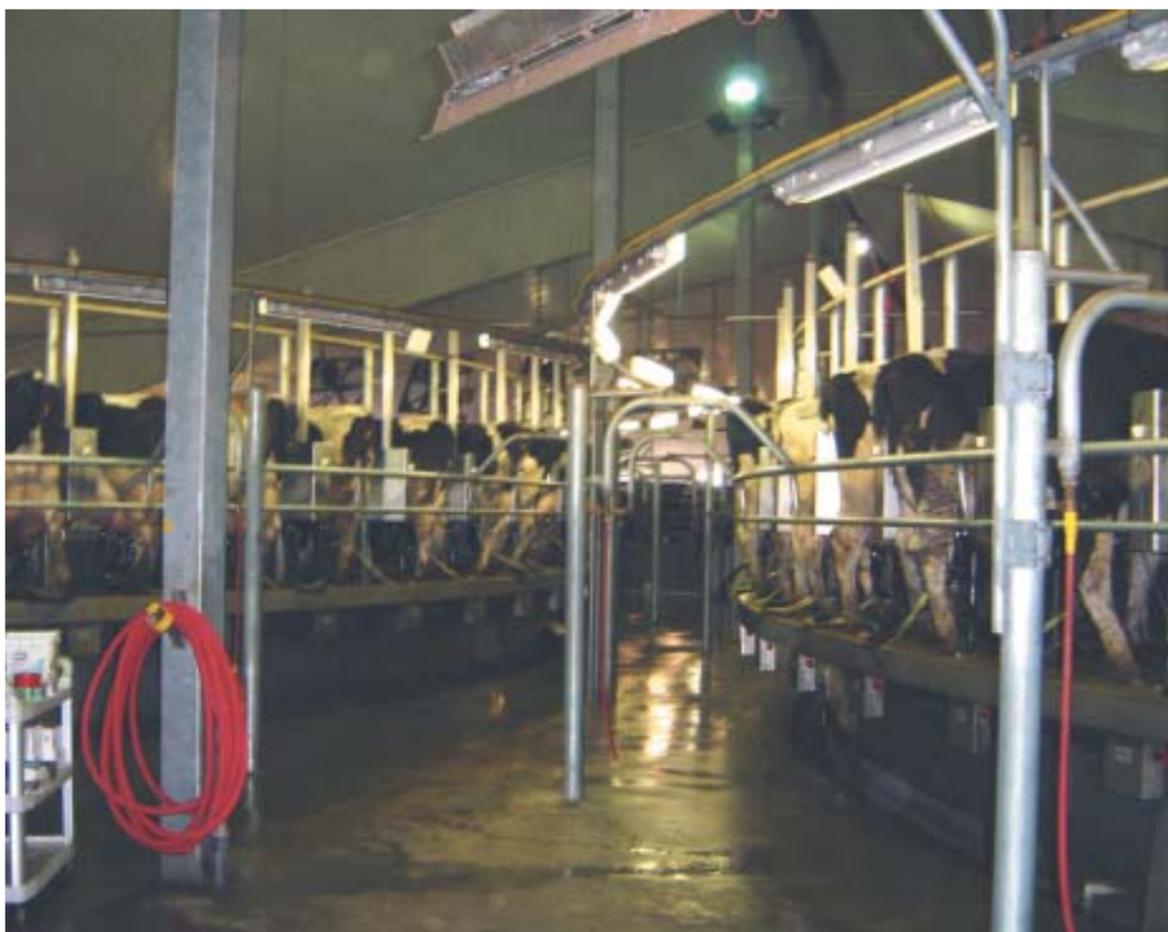
Columbia River Dairies left me with several, often contrasting, impressions.

There are the barns and milk parlours that are so clean your best shoes would never get dirty. Then

there is the thick mud in the uncovered steer raising corrals caused by the recently melted snow and the effluent lakes.

There is the patriotism of the Americans with their huge stars and stripes flag in the middle of the farm and then the Mexicans to whom it's just a job. Huge signs at the gate state that "trespassers will be prosecuted", but the farm employs so many people that they have absolutely no idea who is on the farm at any one time.

Above all though, I was absolutely stunned by its sheer size.



The cows are milked in three parlours each fitted with two New Zealand built rotary platforms.



Early Season

A Healthy Start is Essential for a Healthy Life

Bryan McKay - Dairy Production Systems Ltd

Rearing healthy calves starts with a quick, problem free birth, which requires a healthy, well-fed and well-managed dairy cow.

If the cow is being underfed or has milk fever, labour will take longer and both cow and calf will be tired. Calves suckle less (if at all) and colostrum intake is likely to be inadequate. Calf problems increase, with greater potential for disease or poor performance down the track.

Getting adequate amounts of good quality colostrum into calves quickly is essential for problem-free calf rearing. This has to happen in the first 8 - 12 hours. Leaving calves with cows does not ensure adequate colostrum intake so the first feed should be made up of a mix of a number of cows' first milking colostrum. This means less risk of a single cow having poorer quality colostrum and/or a smaller range of antibody coverage (greater range of disease protection).

Calves that have suckled and bonded to the cow can

be stubborn about learning to drink or too often get missed for a feed in the belief that they will be hungry enough to drink next time. This may be true, but by the time these calves get a good feed of good quality colostrum it may be too late for the disease protecting antibodies in that feed to do them any good. Others simply get weaker from missed feeds.

Collect newborn calves at least twice daily wherever possible and put them in dry clean sheds, feed, tag and spray navels etc. Even if the cow has obviously been suckled, you have no way of knowing how much the calf has had i.e. 1/2 litre (too little) or 4 litres (unlikely).

Assume nothing. Give all newborn calves the opportunity to be fully fed.

Colostrum has two important properties. One is the presence of disease protecting antibodies, the second is its high nutritional value which is the ideal feed for calves. Unfortunately, the ability of the newborn calf to absorb the protective components of the colostrum shuts down reasonably quickly after birth.

As a general guide, calves need to drink at least 10% of their body weight as colostrum in the first 10 hours after birth i.e. a 40kg calf needs four litres of good colostrum.

This can be physically difficult especially for a big calf where chances of a slower birth are greater anyway, or for a small hypothermic calf. Calves that are cold, tired, wet, weak, hypoxic premature etc are all reluctant drinkers, yet need that warm colostrum urgently. Learn to stomach tube new calves. Do not stomach tube calves with cold colostrum or milk.

Calf rearing has three main aims:

- To avoid or eliminate all risk of disease, injury or death
- To physically grow the calf as quickly and efficiently as possible
- To wean a calf capable of maintaining desired growth rate on the available post-weaning feed to reach the final two-year target weight and size.

There is no one system or feeding regime that is right for every circumstance, but there are some principles that need to be followed.

- 1) Calves need adequate nutritional input to be able to grow.
- 2) Colostrum is the best feed available to supply the calf with the best absorbable nutrients and should always be the feed of preference for young calves.
- 3) Colostrum quality declines with each subsequent milking after birth.

For those who are serious about rearing top incoming two-year-old heifers, your calves should get the best colostrum. If you want to sell colostrum, you need to make proper provisions in your calf-rearing regime or buy-in replacements.

Calves have a digestive system set-up to handle colostrum and whole milk. If using calf milk replacers feed only guaranteed good quality powders (some cheap ones are cheap for a good reason). Baby calves

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Management

can only absorb feed from abomasum initially, not from the rumen, consequently while they may eat hard feed at an earlier stage, nutritionally and growth wise they need milk (or colostrum) preferable twice daily until at least 4 - 5 weeks old.

If you use a low quantity milk or early wean from a milk system, then the other components of your feed need to be of much better quality with a more complex make-up to provide the nutrients no longer available from milk. If you feed good quality colostrum and keep it or milk in the diet for longer, your other feeds can be very basic.

The "other feeds" are meal and long fibre. To develop the rumen bug populations needed to process grass and other forages and to develop the proper lining to the rumen wall, the calf needs to consume some starches that can ferment in the rumen.

Grains (barley, maize, wheat, etc) are the most common starch sources used. If you have a well-managed calving system, producing healthy lively calves, being fed good quality colostrum, perhaps progressing to milk (or milk powder) for approximately 10 weeks, then the "meal" part of the diet can be as basic as rolled barley.

The colostrum or milk is providing all the nutrients, vitamins, minerals etc needed to actually grow the calf. If the "milk" part of the diet is limited or removed early, the meal must provide the nutrients for growth as well as the starch to develop rumen function and

hence needs to be much more nutritionally complex. Adding milk powder to a limited amount of milk gives a diet with increased nutritional growth power, but leaves a hungrier calf that can consume more meal for rumen development etc.



How much Feed do cows need in Transition?

By Dr John Roche, - Senior Scientist, Dexcel

Divide a cow's weight by five, this is her energy requirement (MJ ME/cow/day) in the last month of pregnancy.

The period around calving is often referred to as the transition period - referring to the transition the cow makes from being dry and pregnant to lactating. There is considerable confusion on what the energy requirements of a dry cow are during the final month before calving.

During spring 2003, cows in a Dexcel study were fed between 6kg and 11kg pasture DM to determine the energy requirements of grazing dairy cows in the final month before calving.

Results show that cows require approximately 20% of their empty liveweight (liveweight without the calf) in metabolisable energy (ME). Therefore a 400kg Jersey requires 80MJ ME/day, a 450kg crossbred 90MJ ME/day and a 500kg Holstein-Friesian 100MJ ME/day.

Table 1 shows different combinations of feeds that will provide enough energy for cows in the last month before calving. For example, winter saved pasture is approximately 11MJ ME. A herd of crossbred cows (approximately 450kg liveweight) requires 90MJ/cow/day (20% of liveweight).

If only 5kg of pasture DM/cow/day (55MJ ME) is available, approximately 35MJ/day is required from supplements to prevent body condition score loss pre-calving. This is equivalent to between 3kg and 4kg of high quality silage (maize, lucerne or pasture) or 3kg of kale (choumollier).



Table 1: Examples of dry matter intake requirements* (kg/cow/day) of cows during the last 3 weeks before calving

Energy Requirements	Energy (MJME/kg DM)	Jersey (400 kg)			Holstein-Friesian x Jersey (450 kg)			Holstein Friesian (500 kg)		
		80 MJ ME			90 MJ ME			100 MJ ME		
Feed		Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Pasture	11.0	5.0 kg	3.0 kg		5.5 kg	4.5 kg		5.0 kg	3.0 kg	
Silage (High Quality)	10.5	2.5 kg						2.0 kg	4.0 kg	
Silage (Low Quality)	8.5		2.5 kg			3.0 kg				
Maize Silage	10.5		3.0 kg		3.0 kg	1.5 kg		2.5 kg	2.5 kg	2.0 kg
Cereal Silage	10.0			2.5 kg			2.0 kg			
Straw	6.5			3.0 kg			3.0 kg			4.0 kg
Choumollier (Kale)	12.0			3.0 kg			4.5 kg			4.5 kg
Total Intake		7.5 kg	8.5 kg	8.5 kg	8.5 kg	9.0 kg	9.5 kg	9.5 kg	9.5 kg	10.5 kg

*Note: These are "down the cow's throat" requirements.

Magnesium is a Vital Part of Successful Farming

FiL Nutri-Mag F100 dusting magnesium, proven during trials in Taranaki two years ago, is a high purity magnesium oxide from Queensland - typically 95-97% pure magnesium oxide or 58% elemental magnesium. It has a finer particle size than other magnesium products and compares with product from China which can be as low as 86% magnesium oxide and is typically 88% or only 52% elemental magnesium.

Nutri-Mag is highly reactive so is more readily available and therefore more rapidly and easily absorbed into the

rumen. It fully reacts in acidic media in just over a minute compared with lower purity magnesium from China, which takes at least six minutes to react and sometimes as long as 20 minutes. Impurity levels in Nutri-Mag are extremely low and can be at zero in some cases.

Blood tests were taken from trial cows grazing on pastures dusted daily and even the oldest and lowest blood level cows responded well to Nutri-Mag F100 from calving through to mid-lactation.

Whether you use drenching or dusting

grade Nutri-Mag the blood/magnesium response is excellent.

Why do we give cows magnesium?

A dairy cow in lactation needs a significant magnesium intake each day to prevent staggers and maintain high milk yields. Staggers occurs as a result of low blood magnesium levels in cattle.

Very low levels can become critical at calving and in early lactation when the animal's magnesium requirements are not met through normal food sources.

Magnesium supplementation should be started at least 4 - 6 weeks before calving and continue until the end of mating or longer if necessary.

Before beginning magnesium supplementation consult your vet. It may be necessary to carry out blood tests before starting your magnesium programme.

Pasture Dusting

Pasture dusting effectively gets magnesium to dairy cattle.

FiL Nutri-Mag dusting is an excellent product and has proven to give consistently good results over many years.

To ensure the magnesium adheres to pasture it is best applied early morning while there is dew on the grass. It is best to use a spreader that can be calibrated to give a reasonably accurate dose rate. Start supplementation 4 - 6 weeks before calving. Drenching FiL Nutri-Mag drenching is also 95% pure magnesia (MgO) with a very fine 320 mesh.

It is a high quality, very reactive form of magnesium oxide. Dosing is best started early and continued through to at least the end of mating. Farmers should include additives such as FiL Bloateze if there is a bloat risk.

Trough Treatment

FiL Magnesium Chloride comes in flake form, is readily soluble and is suitable for both trough treatment and drenching. It dissolves readily in cold water and is ideally suited for trough treatment particularly for farms set up with in-line dispensing systems.

Start supplementation early, about six weeks before calving so cows adjust to the different taste of the water. Continue treating through to the end of mating.

Make sure the cows can't access untreated water i.e. drains, creeks etc. In wet, cool conditions the cow's water intake will reduce, making water trough treatment not as reliable as pasture dusting or drenching. Farmers may have to switch to dusting in these weather conditions.

FiL Magnesium Sulphate is ideal for water trough treatment because it dissolves readily in cold water. Like all magnesium supplementation, start treatment early.

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However you prefer to administer it, you'll find a magnesium product in the FiL range tailor-made to your needs. From our newly improved, high performance NUTRI-MAG F100 Dusting and F45 Drenching Magnesium Oxide supplements, to Magnesium Sulphate and Magnesium Chloride, there's no better or more comprehensive range available in New Zealand.

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Caustics Corner - Essentially Teats

Teats are essential for the survival of both cattle and dairy farmers as species because the condition of one affects the condition of the other. The trick is to get them working towards the same goal - a low incidence of teat and udder problems, easy milking and high grade-free milk yields.

One can still demolish this ideal state by subsequent plant hygiene problems, but one step at a time.

The foundation of a good management system is a healthy, happy animal with correspondingly healthy udder and teats. But it takes some care and attention to achieve and maintain this state.

Unfortunately, some of the problems the herd had last year will produce problems this year and there is not a lot that can be done about it except plan for the following year. So, let's look at the factors that affect teat and udder condition and what we can do to promote the ideal situation:

A healthy, stress-free cow.

This is a rather complex area, but the basics are an adequate, clean and disease-free environment, well balanced nutrition and attention to any health problems - simple, maybe.

External factors.

This includes the more obvious such as icy conditions, mud and physical hazards together with secondary environmental factors such as sunburn and eczema that may be triggered by health or dietary factors.

The milking plant.

Liner lengths, shape and condition, vacuum pressures, dropper length.

Mastitis.

Clinical, sub-clinical, environmental and cross infections.

Assuming you have done what you can in the first three areas, there is quite a lot that can be done before starting milking.

Pre-calving. Check teats and udders for problems or damage and treat if possible. Milking at this time can be beneficial if they are well bagged up and leaking which leaves them prone to environmental infections. If you do milk, apply salve or emollient before milking to ease them into the process. Teat-spray with a double (or winter

strength) emollient sanitiser afterwards.

Early milking. Apply salve or emollient before milking, paying particular attention to any damaged or poorly configured teats. After milking, ease the cups off and teatspray with high emollient sanitiser. Post-milking spraying helps promote teat condition and is an important control in reduction of new infections, often cross-infections. Pre-milking spraying is of doubtful value, as you really need to post-spray as well to get the teat canal protected as soon as possible after the cups come off. This can be of advantage next year as well. Cows with *C. Bovis* infections this year are three to five times more prone to start the season with Strep. Ubersis infections next year, unless treated by dry cow therapy - usually done only on high count animals (*C. Bovis* will not necessarily increase somatic cell counts.)

Treat or cull persistent mastitis offenders and the higher count animals as soon as they can be identified.

Happy milking. Dr Caustic.

Footrot, a Small Problem with Big Implications

Footrot may seem a minor problem when farmers have to worry about mastitis, thermidurics and low fertility rates, but research shows it accounts for 85% of lameness in dairy cattle.

Most cases occur in the first three months of lactation when it has the greatest impact on milk production and it often increases the calving to conception interval for individuals while treatment with antibiotics keeps milk out of your vat.

What causes footrot?

Footrot is an infection of the space between the claws. It involves two different bacteria which work together to produce the foul smell we associate with the disease. For these bacteria to establish themselves the space between the claws must become damaged either by a sharp object or prolonged wetting. Muddy conditions predispose cows to footrot and so does hurrying cows. Remember, a cow walking at her own pace places her back feet in the tracks left by her front feet. In this way, a cow can avoid sharp rocks and other obstructions.

Once present, the infection requires quick attention to prevent it from spreading to deeper structures of the foot such as the bones, joints and tendons. Once this has occurred, the outcome for the cow is less favourable and may require amputation of a claw,

which invariably reduces lactation life.

It is important to recognise the clinical signs early and treat the condition before it becomes more complicated. The infection can quickly develop into heel cracks which then under-run the entire sole.

Control of Footrot

Check for rough or persistently wet areas which may promote footrot. Consider cementing aprons around water or feed troughs.

Footbaths of copper sulphate (at 2% or 2kg per 100L) or Formalin (at 1 part to 15 parts of cold water) will toughen

the interdigital space of your cows making them more resistant to injury. These should be constructed where the cows walk out of the dairy.

Solutions should be made up freshly for each treatment and discarded after use as the strength can change considerably over time.

Small smooth stones in the bath will help open up the hoof and improve chemical penetration. Infected animals

should have their feet pared before going through the footbath. The bath should be deep enough to just cover the coronet. Contact time should be at least 30 seconds but no longer than five minutes.

After treatment, hold animals in a dry area for at least an hour then let them out on clean pasture. Repeat at weekly intervals until symptoms disappear.

FiL Formalin contains 400g/litre of formaldehyde stabilised with 100ml/litres of methanol. It is registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997 No. 7549.

CAUTION



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Don't let mastitis get a grip on your herd! Lower somatic cell counts and keep teats in top condition with this high quality FiL range. Using cosmetic industry emollient technology, Ultracare Teatshield and Iodoshield keep teats sanitised, conditioned and supple, while FiL Teat Conditioner is the perfect additive when harsh conditions during early lactation demand extra emolliency. Ultracare - tough on mastitis, gentle on teats!



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The many faces of **FIL**

Ian still enjoys working with farmers

FIL Northern South Island Area Manager Ian Grooby has clocked up a decade of service to the company in a region which stretches from Franz Joseph in the west to Culverden in the east.

In that time he has travelled more than half a million kilometres servicing hundreds of clients, ensuring their milking systems are working efficiently and their herds are healthy.

A Murchison identity since 1961 when he moved to the small town 120km south of Nelson with wife Velma, Ian has worked for and owned the local garage, owned the local tearooms and for 10 years managed the Tasman Milk Products store. Having been in the farming environment for so long he claims to know a bit about what the farmers want. Ian believes that having been with FiL for 10 years, his credibility has increased and he has gained the respect of farmers.

"Important aspects of the job are the quality of the products and the regular service calls. For instance, everyone was over the moon with the Quantum range and a lot of sales were the result of word of mouth because it is such a good product.

"I get out and talk to the farmers on their home patch, that's the big thing with this job, we have got the time to do that. Farmers talk more easily when they're on familiar territory, so I think it's vital to visit them and talk about any problems they might have every three or four months."

Starting up your milking plant this season - By Ian Grooby

The 2004-2005 season could be a difficult one for New Zealand dairy farmers but they can prevent costly grades with good pre-season preparation.

If you are one of the lucky ones who gets a chance to escape the farm this winter arrange your annual machine test before you leave - the technician may be too busy when you return just before the season starts. Order new rubberware now - it could be out of stock later.

There are a number of very important checks to be made in the dairy before the first calves start arriving and if these checks don't get done early they can get forgotten or put off with the risk of early season grades.

Important areas to consider

1) Vacuum pump - operation okay, oil replenished

- Pulsators - functioning correctly
- Vacuum line to sanitary trap/receiver clean
- Vacuum gauge - not jammed in one position.

2) Milking system:

- Receiver can - sanitary trap and pulsator line to be cleaned.
- Milk line - all joiners, seals and connections should be replaced in accordance with your best on-farm practice manual.

- Claws - dismantle and clean.
- Rubberware - inflations, claw tubes, milk tubes, bends, sleeves and union seals (refer best on-farm practice manual replacement programme).
- Milk delivery line to filter - inspect and clean.

3) Milk room:

- Pump - check centrifugal impellor, diaphragms and oil level in valves.
- Filter - check for damaged or cracked filter sock keepers (mice chew them in winter).
- Plate cooler - dismantle and clean
- Delivery line to bulk milk tank - sometimes gets overlooked, check the non-return valve.

4) Bulk Milk Tank/Silo:

- Check internal cleanliness.
- Check in place cleaning spray ball for blocked holes (I once found one with a milking glove finger in it!). A filter or screen must be fitted.
- Check silo door, tank outlet and donut seals.
- Back fill silo valve - dismantle and clean.
- Refrigeration - ensure operating okay before first milk needs to be chilled.

5) The Wash System:

- Hot wash requirements - do they meet MAF

requirements? Have you got a reliable thermometer to regularly check the temperature?

- Jettors - have you got a screen on the jettor suction pipe? It is sometimes impossible to see a blocked jettor button. A simple check can be made by running your finger inside all liners to ensure none are greasy.
- Washing - start the wash cycle to ensure flushing pulsators/air injector systems are operating correctly and you have the right flow volumes.

Your FiL Area Manager will be able to advise on the products most suited to your milking plant.



MEN AT WORK

YOUR FIL FARM SERVICE TEAM HAVE GOT THE COUNTRY COVERED

Bryan Eaton Northland Ph: 06 434 7240 Mob: 025 721 507	Mark Mohring North Waikato Ph: 07 823 0522 Mob: 0274 751 502	Stuart Carter Manawatu to Aotearoa Ph: 07 880 0221 Mob: 0274 485 843	Dylan Hessemer Te Awakaiti / Otago/Southern Ph: 07 871 2500 Mob: 0274 993 024	Allan Clarke Bay of Plenty Ph: 07 543 3724 Mob: 0274 720 572	Phil Galkiver North Taranaki Ph: 06 355 9495 Mob: 0274 721 585	Clinton Humphrey Southern North Island Ph: 06 354 4378 Mob: 0274 721 508
Ian Grooby Northland Ph: 07 525 9176 Mob: 0274 721 588	Peter Doskals Southland Ph: 03 485 4572 Mob: 0274 721 504	Gavin Dunn Baitonga/Putaruru Ph: 07 337 2773 Mob: 0274 290 470	John Atkin South Taranaki / Wanganui Ph: 06 275 1450 Mob: 0274 828 135	Geoff Sairty Canterbury/Porirua/Auckland Plains Ph: 07 908 2094 Mob: 025 207 8484	Graig Duncan Canterbury / Midcanterbury Ph: 07 822 5105 Mob: 025 721 549	Allan Tait Central South Island Ph: 03 853 2440 Mob: 0274 993 281

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FIL WEBSITE: www.filnz.co.nz EMAIL: office@filnz.co.nz

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