

Expansion at Tutira

By Lois McKinley



Trevor and Angela Corbin moved from Northland to Southland in 1999 to sharemilk for Tasman Agriculture with the intention of purchasing a farm by 2005.

With large numbers of people converging on the South Island, buying and converting farms, prices had skyrocketed, so the Corbins sold their herd and moved to Tutira in 2006.

The intention was to invest their equity in the family farm. They wanted to keep running the farm as a drystock enterprise on Angela's parents farm. Ian and Eileen Watts owned the family farm at the time and six months ago formed a partnership with Trevor and Angela. After much discussion within the partnership, and prices of sheep not faring too well, it was a natural decision to convert part of the farm into a milking enterprise.

At the time all the decision making processes were taking place, Fonterra had just brought out Gisborne Milk Supplies, and was actively seeking new suppliers.

Ian, Eileen, Trevor and Angela went to one of the Fonterra meetings, which was soon followed up with a visit from a Fonterra representative. A feasibility study was done and the family were accepted as suppliers for Fonterra. Bankers were then spoken to, and finance arranged to convert the farm and build a new shed.

There were three factors that were main contributors to the conversion. Firstly, being able to employ staff made for an easier lifestyle, and allowed for time out, as well as future proofing the farm and allowing for the succession of



Richard Koorey and Sam Whitmore from Waterforce in Hastings.

family members to take over the farm at a later stage.

Secondly, was the Fonterra canvassing, and thirdly Ian and Eileen had spent a number of years developing an underground bore. "We finished that off 15 months ago," said Trevor. "Tests at the time showed there was enough water to irrigate 75 hectares.

"The Hawkes Bay summer dry is our biggest threat," says Trevor. "By irrigating we have minimised that risk."

"We try and encompass an eight to nine hour working day per labour unit with shifts being rotated. The morning shift finishes about 3pm and the later shifts don't start till about 9am."

"We like to look after staff as they are our biggest asset, so it is important to keep them happy."

Size counts

Two hundred hectares were converted from the 390 effective hectares of farmland, leaving the

steeper hills for wintering the 520 predominantly jersey cows. There are also 500 sheep still grazed on the hills. The farm is cut up by a railway, a road and a gorge.

The heavens opened up for my trip to Tutira to visit with Trevor and Angela Corbin. I had to dodge flooded areas, slips and road blocks. You name it, I struck it. I finally arrived at the Watts and Son newly converted dairy farm to view the work in progress.

The new shed, which I expected to be finished when I arrived

was still under construction. "It will all be finished and ready to commission next week" says Trevor. I imagine it will be a sight to see too. It looks as though it is going to be yet another fantastic shed when it is fully completed, and the tanker track finished off.

Firstly I met with Barry Wilson from Barry Wilson Electrics. He gave me a quick rundown on his work so far.

There was a big job involved with the electrics for this shed. Prior to the site preparation there was a proliferation of power lines all over the place, some hanging dangerously low, and plenty of them. Wilson Electrics from Napier organised and designed the new power system. All existing wiring was put underground, which tidied up the safety and sight issues.

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transformer within close proximity, and this too was part of the deciding factor in where the new shed was constructed. It needed to be in a central location as well as being near the required amenities and tanker access.

There is an 11,000 three phase power transformer within close proximity, and this too was part of the deciding factor in where the new shed was constructed. It needed to be in a central location as well as being near the required amenities and tanker access. Barry began work

Steve Short
from Short
Construction.

back in April. During the process Barry had three to four staff members assisting with the electrical side of things.

Barry says he does a lot of rural work and is grateful in these times to have the work.

Shedding choices

The family checked out three brands of shed and, for them Milfos came up tops. "Milfos seemed more stable in the area of technology," says Trevor. "We compared different systems and machinery, and found the Milfos systems far superior technologically." "We spoke with other farmers who were trialing the heat detection and mastitis modules, and their game plan was really good. The Milfos area representative, Matthew Williams, bent over backwards to assist us. He was just brilliant."

A 50 bail rotary with automatic cup removers was installed to allow for one person milking 80 per cent of the year.

A Milfos automatic drafting system has also been installed, with further computer modules to be installed as finances allow. The computer system is fully set up to allow for the future installation of modules as needed. The total package, pricing, commitment and technology was sound and functional.

Choosing Equipment

When the family approached Milfos to enquire about dairy equipment for their farm conversion, they differently had a clear plan of what the result needed to be. "After showing the Corbins and Watts some of

our existing installations, it was decided the dairy would have a high level of automation and labour saving devices," says Matthew Williams from Milfos.

"We have installed a 50 bail IFlow platform that features hydraulic drive units to allow cows to be unloaded if the power goes off, nylon rollers with no bearings to maintain and a fully galvanized bail ready for the automation to just bolt on. The rotary also features the Milfos drop down system that lowers the clusters under the bridge and picks them back up on the other side. This system removes the chance for the cows to damage the cups and rubberware as they enter or exit the platform.

The IConveyer machine has been installed with automatic wash system for the plant and the vat. The main benefit for auto plant washing is the wash system will do an accurate wash every time regardless of staff knowledge. The wash system will handle the chemical dosing and the water requirements into the wash tub. The system is fitted with safety switches on the vat

tap and vat door to prevent wash water entering the milk or milk being pumped down the drain.

Cup removers, milk metres and conductivity metres have been installed to record yields, prevent over milking and give alerts for cows with potential somatic cell problems.

The milk metering and conductivity is performed with an infrared milk meter that can give the yield, flow rate & milking times. The infrared meter is a unique system as it has no moving parts or servicing required.

The plant is fitted with variable speed pulsation that adjusts its rate and ratio depending on the milk flow from the individual cow. The cows that don't let down their milk are stimulated with fast pulsation to give a let down. The ones that do drop their milk quickly will be milked out faster and cleaner with a longer milking phase.

Each milking cow is fitted with an electronic ear tag for identification, which enables them to be drafted with Milfos' Dataflow drafting gate. The drafting gate system is designed to allow the cow flow to be kept to a maximum while accurately drafting chosen cows. The cows are identified with two separate antenna before being drafted by fast operating split gates that allow a wide entry point to the drafting pens. The drafting system is controlled by Data Flow, Milfos' herd management system. The Data Flow software will allow the addition of automatic heat detection, rumination monitoring, cow yields, feeding, weighing and SSC alerts to the system.

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When the Watts family decided to convert their 200ha sheep and dry stock farm to Dairy they went to WaterForce for their water needs. The conversion presented an ideal opportunity for a fresh approach to the entire farm infrastructure.

The Watts farm is mostly hill country, which presented challenges in design over flatter farming platforms. WaterForce's specialist design team worked closely with the Watts family prior to work commencing to achieve excellent results in design and layout of services.

The design process began with a full GPS survey of the site by WaterForce, which was then imported into IRRICAD software. The Watts requirements included cost effective installation, future proof and provision for sufficient back up services. Everything is recorded on the IRRICAD design software, making future expansion and changes to the system through to locating services buried in ground a breeze - thanks to modern GPS locating equipment.

The water supply for the farm comes from a single bore with an existing submersible pump. Variable speed drive controls were provided for efficiency and to prolong bore and motor life. Four 30,000-litre water tanks store the bore water. A total of eight tanks provides two days backup water supply, should



anything go wrong with the single water supply. Approximately 30km of pipeline was laid throughout the farm to connect pumps, tanks, troughs and irrigation services.

The irrigation system was installed to cover the 70ha area of the farm suitable for irrigation. Approximately 25ha of the irrigation area is also used for effluent disposal. The IRRIPOD sprinkler shift system was selected for both irrigation and effluent disposal. Being a flexible, low-pressure application system, the IRRIPOD was an ideal solution for the Watts farm operation.

The IRRIPOD layout was designed by Richard Koorey, WaterForce's Senior Design Engineer. Careful design is the

key to a successful IRRIPOD system. In the installation, IRRIPOD

hydrants were located over the irrigation area. A pipeline is run from the hydrants, onto which the pods are connected.

SENNINGER sprinklers were selected for the IRRIPOD system. The SENNINGER sprinklers are a high quality, highly uniform plastic impact sprinkler designed for irrigation and effluent disposal in pod systems.

The IRRIPOD system has been supplied with an IRRIPOD ATV tow trailer, which enables the IRRIPOD line to be caught, relocated and released without the farmer having to leave their vehicle. A total of 330 IRRIPODS are run in three, eight-hour irrigation shifts. At the end of each shift, the sets of pods are moved to the next location while the next group is put into operation.

For their effluent management, the Watts have selected a two-pond system, sized for a one-month storage capacity as per council regulations. WaterForce has designed a three stage filtration system and incorporated an industrial grade AMIAD SAF Automatic Self Cleaning filter, which

operates before the liquid is piped off to the IRRIPOD effluent sprinkler system. For the Corbins, this will minimize potential blockages to the pipelines and the small IRRIPOD sprinkler nozzles, ensuring trouble-free operation of their effluent system.

The Watts dairy conversion project has run smoothly, due to close involvement by all parties including the WaterForce design team and installation and contracting crews. WaterForce is proud to be involved with the Watts family farm and look forward to working with them as they continue dairy operation in Hawke's Bay.

Calf Accommodation

There is an amazing looking calf shed that has also been newly constructed by Short Construction from Hastings. Steve Short says they build a variety of sheds, from calf sheds and stable blocks to workshops. The pole shed is designed so a tractor can come in the side roller door and drive right down the centre aisle and out the other side door. It has easy access for dropping off calf shavings and calves.

There are two rooms at the end of the shed. One room encompasses the pumps and electricals for the houses and farm. The other is a supply storage room. "The client had a huge input into the design of the shed, and once we know what their requirements are, we will build to their needs," says Steve. "We don't just have one or two sets of plans, it is very flexible."

The pole sheds can also be constructed with no centre poles at all if required.

Ian, Eileen, Trevor and Angela are very much looking forward to the completion of his new dairy shed by mid July so he can commence calving on the first of August.

By Lois McKinley



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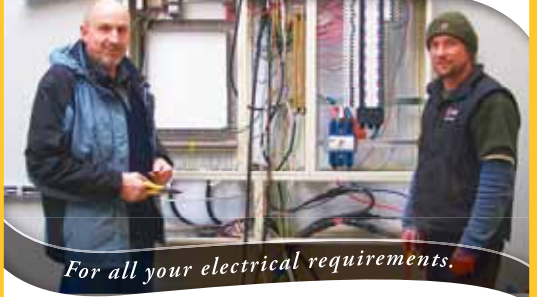
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