

SUCCESSFUL OAD SYSTEMS ON A DIFFICULT FARM

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“I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me.”

Dudley Field Malone

Introduction

- All I ask is that you have an open mind. I am not selling anything. Each one of us is unique; if you take say 10 different things that make you and your farm unique, and there were only 2 different outcomes then there would be 1024 different possibilities. All I want to do is to make you aware of a choice that is available
- It may or may not be for you. You don't need to prove to me that OAD won't work for you. Life and farming is all about sifting out from all the information that is available and choosing the bits that work for you. By choosing not to put all the available information in the sieve you could be missing some very useful information.
- There are lies, damn lies and then there are statistics. I prefer the saying “He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts — for support rather than for illumination “.
- I have proof that whether you have a ticket in lotto or not makes no difference: Last week I had a ticket and got nothing; this week I didn't have a ticket and the same result!

Farm statistics

- We own a block of 128 ha in total, with 115ha effective. We moved to Woodbury in 1996 and milked 190 cows with three areas of the farm fenced, an old cowshed and an old house.
- Within a couple of years a neighbouring block of 40ha was leased which increased to 120ha the following year. Then 200ha, over the road, was leased

Notes:

- For 5 years, until 2003, we farmed on 430ha and milked up to 1,080 cows, with young stock at home.
- These were milked TAD through a 30 aside herringbone; which was obviously not sustainable; and during this time we had a severe autumn drought, with no rain until late May.
- We have milked OAD for 4 full seasons, in 2003 to 2007, and 2010/11; we milked a mixture of OAD / TAD in 2007 to 2010, but with all cows started on OAD [see table below].
- In 2003/04, the size of the farm and the herd decreased considerably [see table below] and it was operated by a 50% share-milker; 90 % of the herd was milked OAD from October.
- We decided to milk OAD mainly because of the small milking shed [30 aside herringbone], and because of the long walking distances to some areas of the farm.
- The main benefits of OAD and OAD/TAD have been: less time spent in the milking shed, less walking for the cows and less lameness, improved mating and fertility in the cows, greater flexibility operating the farm
- The main disadvantages of OAD and OAD/TAD have been mastitis and SCC and I now get to meetings on-time.

Now

- We currently have a 230ha milking platform, of which 30% is irrigated. We have no runoff; all young stock off the platform till calving, and dry cows are wintered off.
- 2010/11; 820 cows, an all-sorts herd , mainly HF x J crosses and Jerseys
- Staff; three full time staff, and some part time.
- Feeds imported onto, and fed on the platform;
 - In 2009/10 ; 73 t DM as PKE and 175t DM as Mother liquor.
 - In 2010/11 ; 153 t DM as PKE and 202 t DM as Mother liquor
- Mating; 6 weeks AI and 6 weeks with bull; 82% in-calf in 6 weeks; 8.5% not pregnant.
- Average SCC in 2010/2011 was about 230,000

Herd statistics and performance

2002/03 was the final and best year of TAD, on 330 hectares; thereafter the farm was 210 and 230 hectares, as shown below.

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	TAD	TAD/OAD #	OAD	OAD	OAD	O/TAD	O/TAD	O/TAD	OAD
hectares	330	210	210	230	230	230	230	230	230
cows	1,080	650	700	750	770	780	720	680	820
Kg MS	338,714	197,051	205,585	215,236	250,113	254,960	213,042	207,580	225,000
KgMS/cow	329	318	290	299	329	331	304	310	275
KgMS/ha	1,026	938	979	936	1,087	1,109	926	903	978
KgMS/person							71,000	69,000	75,000
\$ EFS/ha	1,255	#	2,056	1,979	2,114	5,355	2,237	3,085	

With a 50% sharemilker

Future plans

- In 2011/12, we plan to milk one herd [approximately 400 cows] TAD, and the other herd [approximately 350 cows] OAD.
- The TAD herd will be grazed on the home block with shorter distances to walk, and including the irrigated area of the farm. The OAD herd will be grazed on the more distant lease block, of dry-land with no irrigation.

A section reprinted from a published article

The next part of this paper, in italics, has been reproduced from page 38 in the paper by R Anderle and D Dalley, published in the Proceedings of the OAD Milking Conference, 2007 [LIC, Dexcel, Agresearch and Lincoln University]

The section refers to the case-study farm of John and Kath Saywell:

- *Target production of 1000 kg MS/ha for the 2006-07 season is a very good level of production for any semi-irrigated, mostly pasture-based, system in this region. Indeed,*

Notes:

many of the Border Strip irrigated farms in mid-Canterbury do not easily get above this mark.

- *John falls into the avoiding capital expenditure segment of the OAD milking case study analysis. The 30 aside herringbone dairy is a limiting factor for a TAD milking system. Since a large proportion of the milking land is leased it was unwise to invest in a new or significantly altered dairy and the housing that would be needed to run an efficient TAD milking system.*
- *To manage the potential feed shortages in the summer with limited irrigation, 12 ha of summer turnips are grown. In addition, approximately 200 kg/cow/season, or less than 5% of the total diet, is supplied as Proliq. A cheap source of feed from the Clandeboye factory.*
- *While annual milk production figures (299 kg MS/cow and 936 kg MS/ha) are relatively low for Canterbury, other advantages of OAD milking certainly offset these.*
- *The areas where large gains have been made are:*
 - *Net profit*
 - *Interest return on total farm capital employed*
 - *MS margin*
 - *Overall cost of production*
 - *EFS per hectare*
- *In his report for the 2005-06 set of accounts the accountant made the following statement, which I think sums up the success of the Saywell change to OAD milking*
- *“The improvement in profitability in the 2005 and 2006 years, compared with the profitability in the three years prior to that is enormous, that is, there is an improvement in profitability of about \$200,000 or more in the last two years.”*
- *In his report for 2010 he said “The net profit to gross farm income ratio is at 29.7%; - very few get near 30%, practice average is 15 to 25 %.*