

Machinery & Products

Just better

Less plant noise with even vacuum

TONY HOPKINSON

THE farm of National MP Shane Ardern and wife Cathy at Te Kiri, near Opunake, in south Taranaki is an intensive farming operation.

A seasonal supply farm milking 560 cross bred cows in an area near the coast, it is prone to summer dries and crops are grown and other feeds brought in to maintain production in the variable seasonal conditions.

The farm is 195ha (eff.) and mainly flat contour, with a runoff 5km from the home farm. Ten hectares of turnips are grown for a summer crop, 7ha of maize is grown and stored as maize silage and 25ha are harvested for grass silage some from the runoff. The maize silage is stored in two concrete bunkers and the grass silage in a pit. The herd also winters for up to 20 days on the run off.

Also fed are PKE and Top Cow Maxim meal with an Inghams in-shed feeding system and Prolac and some molasses are available using Normanby Fibreglass mobile troughs.

Kevin and Carol Hill are lower order sharemilkers on the farm this season after working on the farm in the previous season.

"It is a well set up and fenced farm with a central race and a 40-bail rotary, and with three staff plus myself and Carol is easy to operate," says Kevin.

At the start of this season the Hills had a Corkill Systems Vari-vac unit installed at their cost. The expense of installing a unit is of-

ten discussed between owners and sharemilkers, with the lower electrical costs benefit accruing to the sharemilker who pays the electric-

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ity account, and the lower somatic cell count benefiting both parties.

"We always have offered a trade-in scheme for sharemilkers at the end of their contracts where we will trade their unit at book value against a bigger unit when they are going to a bigger farm," says Corkill Systems owner Steve Corkill.

The first benefit immediately obvious to the Hills was the reduction in the noise level.

"We had a noisy oil-vane vacuum pump and the lower noise levels helped us and the stock as well," says Kevin.

The farm's somatic cell count is running 100,000 less than at the same time last year and he reports the cows are more at ease with the even vacuum levels.

Hill appreciates the service given by Corkill Systems and there have been no teething problems. "We are thrilled with the benefits already and I know the electricity costs will be down."

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Carol and Kevin Hill, Opunake share milkers.