

Gentler handling lifts milk production

A CORKILL Dairy Systems lobe pump installed early February already has a Norsewood, Hawke's Bay, dairy farm noting a 6% increase in milk solids, says the supplier's New Zealand sales manager, Vern Coxhead.

The farmer, Hamish Galloway, says the principle of a lobe milk pump "makes a lot of sense in that it pushes the milk around but does not force it; it handles the milk gently." He reckons the increase will return the farm \$110,000 annually, soon paying for the pump and installation. "It is a no-brainer, getting a return like that for the investment."

Hamish and his Irish wife Michelle, with his parents, are part of Galloway Enterprises which

owns a 380ha (eff) farm with a winter milk contract. Rainfall is 1400mm and the area is prone to summer dries. "We catch a lot of rain before the Takapau Plains."

The milking platform is 250ha with the balance used for support, growing 40ha of maize, harvesting 500 large round hay bales and running young stock.

They milk 680 cows in spring and 220 for the winter contract. The dairy shed is a 50-bail rotary believed one of the first built in the district in 1991. It has automatic cup removers.

Adjacent to the shed is a feeding platform that can hold 900 head. There they feed the maize silage, 40t of corn starch, 200t of sweet malt and other 'waste' products including



Hamish Galloway

barley malt, broil and confectionary rejects.

"The family dog helps himself to any confectionary that drops on the ground."

The farm has adopted the Outgrow biological programme for three years, a substantial benefit, Galloway says. Their soils retain a lot of phosphate and have been difficult to farm.

Part of the programme is introducing diverse species into their pastures,

including chicory, plantain, lucerne and red and white clovers. They run for most of the season a 30-40 day round on the high producing grasses. The farm averages 300,000kgMS equating to 470kgMS/cow.

The farm is centrally raced with the furthest paddock a 3km walk

Somatic cell count formerly averaged 220,000 but is now down to 150,000.

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