

The Ins and Outs of Winter Milking

Dan Hinton



Dan started his career working on farms in the Waikato region before heading to Europe for his OE. He returned to New Zealand to work at the Claas Harvest Centre in Hamilton where he met Abbie. From there he was off to Lincoln University to study agriculture. Upon completing his degree, Dan worked for DairyNZ as a consulting officer in the Matamata area.

Dan and Abbie are now 100% autumn calving on the home farm in Eureka as 50/50 sharemilkers.

1993-94	Attended Polytechnic and gained a certificate in Ag. Worked on dairy farm as a farm assistant.
1994-96	Travelled to England on an ITO scholarship, worked on farms.
1996-98	Returned home to manage a farm.
1998-2000	Back to England.
2000-02	Worked for CLAAS Harvesting in Hamilton, met Abbie.
2004-07	Lincoln University studying Ag.
2008-10	Worked for DairyNZ as a consulting officer in Matamata.
2010-now	50/50 sharemilking on the home farm.

Farm data

Eff hectares	170
Peak cows milked	570
Breed	FX
Calving date	20 th Feb
Mating date	20 th May
MS/ha	1324
MS/cow	395
Bought in feed/cow (kg DM/cow)	670
N loss/ha (avg)	42

Reasons for moving to autumn calving

- We wanted most of the lactation period when pasture ME is at its highest.
- Have a natural desire to experiment.
- Autumn calving is much more suitable for family life.

Transition to autumn calving

2014

Receiving a \$8.00 pay out and it was probably going to head towards a \$10.00 pay out 😊.

June	Purchased 350 autumn calving cows for Dec delivery.
July/Aug	Had 500 cows calving in July/Aug.
Oct/Nov	Mated whole herd in Oct/Nov.
Dec	In Dec started selling 400 spring calving cows, cow values started dropping.

2015

Pay out significantly drops.

Jan	Signed another 150 empty autumn calving cows for 1 st Dec.
20 th Feb	350 autumn cows start calving.
1 st May	130 R2yr June calving heifers arrive.
18 th May	400 (sold) spring calving cows leave.
June	130 R2yr heifers calving.
July/Aug	60 budget cows that weren't sold calving.
Mid Sept	Sale 80 autumn empties. 60 spring budgets. 100 R3yr heifers on in-milk market.
Nov	Purchased 80 in-milk autumn calving cows.
Dec	150 autumn calving cows arrive.

2016

Pay out still low.

Feb/Mar	500 cows calving.
July/Aug	130 2yr heifers calve.
Sept	Sale 130 2yr heifers sold on in-milk market. 120 cows sold on the in-milk market.
Sept	60 cows in-milk carryovers were purchased.

2017

Feb/Mar 490 MA cows calving.
80 R2+R3yr heifers calving (20 & 24+ 32 months of age).

Recommendations for transition to autumn calving

Two options

1. Sell your spring calving herd on the in-milk market in September. Historically you receive good value for cows at this time of year. The herd leaves the farm in September. Over the next four months harvest a large amount of pasture silage for winter milking. Plant crops, maize or winter crops. Take a good holiday. Use the money from the cow sale to fund the purchase of an autumn calving herd including some carryover cows. Also use funds to cashflow through the transition period.
2. If you want to keep your herd, implement an extend lactation programme (milk the herd continuously for 18 months). Rather than mating the herd in Oct/Nov transfer this to May/June mating the following year. It is very important that you get feeding level correct over the later part of the 18 month period. No days of underfeeding cows as they will start to dry off.

Paul and Kevin Schuler



Paul and Kevin Schuler have had careers off-farm consisting of rural banking, operations management of large scale dairy operations in Brazil, farm consultancy and professional rugby.

The Schulers currently own and run a combined autumn calving dairy farm, as well as a spring kidding milking goat operation.

The farming business consists of 216 ha, 7 km south of Te Aroha with 1250 goats and 450 dairy cows.

Paul Schuler

1985-89	Lincoln University B.Com.Ag VFM.
1990-2001	Rural Bank - National Bank, Tauranga, Matamata, Morrinsville.
1995-2002	Managed/contract milked family dairy farm Te Aroha.
2002-10	Moved to Brazil and developed and became operations manager on a large scale dairy unit. 2500 cow dairy business that included its own UHT plant. Farm system based on intensively managed tropical pastures.
2010-present	Rural Business Solutions consultancy.
2011-present	Paul and Kevin purchased brother's share in the family farm.

Kevin Schuler

1985-89	Massey University B.Ag.
1989-95	Selected for the All Blacks.
1992-2002	Played and coached rugby in Japan.
2002-12	Coached BOP rugby team.
2012-present	Sold garage door business to put all focus into the family farming business.

Farm data

Eff hectares	216*
Peak cows milked	450
Breed	XB
Calving date	2 nd Feb
Mating date	1 st May
MS/ha	1324
MS/cow	355**
Bought in feed/cow (kg DM/cow)	650

* Includes goat cut and carry area.

** This is low due to 20% of herd sold early to allow harvesting feed for goats.

Goat farming business

2014/15 was the first season supplying the dairy goat coop.

- Winter 1400 goats.
- Peak milk 1250 goats.
- Start kidding on the 23rd July (seasonal supply).
- 138,000 kg quota.
- 2000 kg MS/ha.
- Dry off in late March/early April.
- Roughly speaking cost of production is 50% of milk revenue.
- Goats were originally grazed outside now housed all year.
- Goat housing area is 120m by 40m.
- Feeding system is a pasture cut and carry, pasture silage, maize silage, and approved grains and DDG.
- Economics drive that goats are a priority over the dairy cows for resources.

Dairy farm business

- 2nd February calving date.
- 300 cows calve in the autumn.
- 150 in milk empty cows are purchased in Feb/March.
- Peak milk 450 cows through the winter, will be moving to 500 cows in the future.
- Mixed breed of cows but moving to a smaller XB herd profile.
- Cows are milked OAD all season.
- Herd is on a 60 -70 day rotation from April – July.
- 1st May to 15th June mating (6 weeks) with an empty rate of 20%. Second mating window 15/10 to 30/11. Cows in calf for spring calving are sold by Christmas. Known proceeds fund purchase of in-milk empties.
- In-milk empties provide herd replacements, calves reared are sold prior to entering herd.
- 40 aside HB shed.
- No feed pad at this stage but planning to build one soon.
- 160,000kg MS/year, to increase to 180,000 kg MS with feed pad and further improvement of land areas recently purchased.
- 355 kg MS/cow. This is low due to 20 % of herd sold early due to the goat demands for pasture and silage harvesting. If this was not the case the herd would do ~ 400 kg MS/cow.
- 13 ha fodder beet is grown/year at 30 – 35 t DM/ha (start grazing at 25 t DM/ha).
- 300 t DM waste from the goat feed is fed to the milking cows.
- Chicory 10 ha, plantain 10 ha - to ensure constant feed quality for goats over summer.
- 100 kg N/ha/yr is applied.
- Have 150 ha consent to irrigate in the future.

Production

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Dairy	Mating		20 % cows sold in this period			Drying off		Calving			Mating	
Goat		Kidding						Mating		Drying off		

Between August and December look to sell cows that failed to get in-calf over 6 week autumn mating period. If not sold prior, repeat 6 week mating 15/10 to 30/11. Aim to have cows sold and gone prior to Christmas so can shut down shed over summer.

Low demand from cows December/January.

In future will align kidding with school holidays.

Schuler transition to 100 % autumn calving

Season	Spring calving numbers	Autumn calving numbers	Goat business demand for feed
2014/15	500	120	low
2015/16	300	200	medium
2016/17	0	300	high