



CASE STUDY

Marcel and Toni Boschma

Marcel and Toni Boschma
Location: Martinborough, Wairarapa
1000 cow dairy farm, equity partnership
528 hectares

Challenges

- Reduce time spent on farm drafting cows for AB
- Inability to get off farm during busy periods

Benefits

- Accurate information
- Frees up time to spend off farm and enables a break during mating
- Ability to target specific cows that need attention
- More days in milk
- Lifestyle – better work/life balance
- Reduction in calving time

Marcel and Toni Boschma gain instant, accurate and reliable information on their cows, and free up Marcel to spend more time off farm with his family, with Allflex collars.

The Boschmas farm just south of Martinborough and are one of four owners in the equity partnership, formed on the 528ha property four years ago. They milk 1000 cows and operate a fully automated 60-bale rotary milking shed. They have been using collars for just over 12 months.

In the past, the couple have been tied to the farm during mating, making it difficult to take a break and spend quality time with their family.

Learning to trust the technology, targeting cows that need attention and focusing on cow health, means more days in milk and has already significantly reduced calving from 13 weeks down to nine.

Allflex collars are proving a valuable tool for Wairarapa dairy farmers Marcel and Toni Boschma, giving them instant information about their cows, all accessed at the click of a button from the computer – meaning Marcel doesn't physically need to be on farm to make decisions.

The new technology has required a shift in thinking, learning to trust the collars and the information they feed back, but Marcel



Livestock Intelligence™

MSD Animal Health Intelligence

now says he would not consider running a farm without them.

The decision to implement the system was to gain a tool to provide accurate information, and quickly, freeing up Marcel's time.

"Being able to target cows specifically that need attention and not standing in the cowshed for three hours a day, drafting cows for AB, that's massive."

The collars have freed the couple up to get off farm during mating and have peace of mind. "All I need to do is look at the computer once a day to make those mating decisions," Marcel says.

They have two options with the system, which works nicely with their automated cow shed. They can either leave it as is on auto draft, so the cows are drafted in the morning for the AB technician, or they can revert to manual and actually identify each cow on the computer and draft it.

Alerts while they are away mean Marcel can now track the cow's recovery on the computer, without actually being on farm, something he says is very valuable.

Before the collars, Marcel was tied to the shed for hours every day, drafting cows, now the process takes just 10 to 15 minutes a day. The farm is full AB and they have already benefited from a tighter calving pattern.

"Pre-mating we can actually identify cows that aren't cycling and really make some stronger decisions around which cows we want to reproduce from for the herd."

The Boschmas have already reduced calving from 13 weeks down to nine weeks, and say the collars will help deliver more days in milk, too. Collars have enabled them to pick up issues with cows having difficult calvings, faster. "Like cows that have got twins on board and the second one hasn't come out. So we've picked up those cows. We've saved cow lives, we've saved calves."

Armed with this information, Marcel is able to relax more at mating, and that gives them better work life balance.

"We've got two kids, so it's important that he's with us. The last few years, if we wanted to see him, we'd have to go out and spend time on farm. With these collars, he can come home and have a look on the computer and not have to physically go out in the paddock. So it makes a huge difference to our lifestyle," Toni explains.

They don't believe the collars have a negative effect on staff and their ability, either.

"We were told by some people that you're going to dumb down your staff by putting collars on. But I don't believe you are. Your good staff are still going to come to the top, grab that technology and run with it, with you," Marcel says.

With greater use of technology on farm being the way of the future, collars provide a point of difference and staff generally embrace the use of new technology. As well, it gives them the ability to make decisions with confidence.

"They probably still do rely on me a lot, but the collar does reinforce my decision and then they're happy knowing there is a guarantee behind the cow."

Using the collars has been a huge change in mind-set, but one the Boschmas are happy to have made.

"Once you get your head around the technology and the information side of it, it's very, very good."

"The technology definitely gives you the ability to do the volume and the accuracy. And just being able to really quantify what is really going on accurately with cows."

"If we were to invest in another farm...this would be the first thing on the list. Remotely, I would not invest in a farm unless we had collars on the cows, because we can 100% quantify what is going on with the cows. So being proactive rather than reactive on cow management."



Allflex Livestock Intelligence, part of MSD Animal Health, is the world leader in the design, development, manufacturing and delivery of solutions for animal identification, monitoring and traceability. Our solutions empower farmers to act in a timely manner, to safeguard their animals' health, while achieving optimal production outcomes for a healthy food supply.

Through its commitment to the Science of Healthier Animals®, MSD Animal Health offers veterinarians, farmers, pet owners and governments one of the widest ranges of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and health management solutions and services. MSD Animal Health is dedicated to preserving and improving the health, well-being and performance of animals and the people who care for them.

www.allflex.global/nz | custserv@allflex.co.nz