



CASE STUDY

Rudolph Stoop

Rudolph Stoop – senior farm manager,
Rakaia Island

Location: Canterbury

Herd size: 8800 milking cows

Challenges

- Large scale operation
- Large herd - difficulty monitoring health issues

Benefits

- Accurate information
- Proactive - cows needing assistance detected earlier
- Improved cow health and welfare
- Strong conception rates
- Increased milk quality
- Staff gain confidence to detect and understand issues with cows
- Team brought closer through the ability to share knowledge
- Reduced stress on staff and more rest time during mating

“Precision is key when working with livestock. Accurate data enables staff at Rakaia Island to be proactive in finding the right cow, at the right time, with Allflex collars.”

Rudolph Stoop is a senior farm manager for Rakaia Island in Canterbury. This large-scale operation is milking 8800 cows and has a strong focus on environmental sustainability, as well as good cow health and welfare.

Being such a large scale operation, monitoring and identifying animal health issues has been challenging in the past.

Now, with the collars, any staff member at any time can look at the app on their phone to quickly and easily identify cows needing immediate attention.

Access to precise information has reduced stress on staff during the busy mating period, allowing better work life balance.

The Allflex collars are a game changer for the future of the dairy industry, and access to precise data enables the team at Rakaia Island in Canterbury to identify the right cow, at the right time.

Rudolph says in order to ensure good conception rates and quality milk, cow health is key. Data from the Allflex collar system means staff are now more proactive in identifying cows that need attention and can act, fast.



Livestock Intelligence™

MSD Animal Health Intelligence

"Precision is key when working with livestock. This system is a game changer for the future of the dairy industry," he says.

This precise information, which all staff can easily access through the app on their phone, has already improved fertility rates, as well as overall health and care of the cows.

"The data we get from the collars is used to detect the slightest change in the cow, so we can act fast with any health issues. The flow on effect being strong conception rates and quality milk. It's been crucial to the way we work as a team, building consistency and improving overall cow health and welfare."

Cows needing assistance are now detected as early as possible, something that was previously a challenge for such a large scale operation.

"During calving, when going out at night to check the cows – it's dark, cold. You can get quickly confused with a large number of cows and you miss some cows. The collar system enabled us to have a look at the app before we go out, making it so much easier to look for the cow in distress and give them attention to get them out of that distress period as quick as possible."

Like any new technology, building faith in a new system takes time, but Rudolph says the team has built confidence in it during calving and mating.

"It's giving us the data that it is designed to do and, through that, it's strengthened our confidence in it...seeing it actually in action was a huge success."

As well as increased fertility rates, lameness has also reduced since the collars were introduced.

"The system detects activity, how much she has walked that day. Being a lame cow, she's not going to walk a lot and therefore, she's not going to eat a lot. The system automatically drafts her out if she is in distress."

A big benefit has been reducing stress on staff, allowing them more free time and more rest time, particularly during mating. In turn, this means they have more energy when they do come in to work.

Staff have been prompted to keep animal health at front of mind and be more involved, thinking deeper about the reasons a cow might be in distress. "When they wake up in the morning, they've got the notifications, they immediately can start thinking about animal health."

Having staff take more ownership of animal health issues also frees up Rudolph's time.

"The system is a game changer for me. It has enabled me and the staff to have more time to focus on work and other responsibilities out on the farm. I would definitely recommend a business look at this system to improve animal health and improve staff work and life balance.

"To have a system in place that improves animal welfare and health means a lot for a dairy business. Dairy cows are the backbone of our business. Without them, we cannot be dairy farming, and the better they are looked after, often the better their health is, the better the business is doing."



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.

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