



CASE STUDY

Thomas and Andrea Scheres

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Location: Putaruru, Waikato
420 cow dairy farm
100 hectares

Challenges

- Heat detection was getting harder and harder
- Spilt calving means they don't want to dry off empty cows as they carry these through until Autumn

Benefits

- Considerable reduced the amount of straws used while maintaining good in-calf rate
- Detect optimum time to inseminate
- Early health detection at subclinical stage reduced recovery and therefore more days in milk
- No more tail paint
- Lifestyle – more time with the family



Livestock Intelligence™

MSD Animal Health Intelligence

Thomas and Andrea Scheres wouldn't farm without Allflex Collars, they 100% trust the data they provide and see the collars as one of the most valuable tools in their toolbox.

Thomas and Andrea Scheres are equity partners on one of the Scheres family's Putaruru farms. The third-generation to take on this South Waikato farming operation, the family has been early adopters of the Allflex system and, after eight years down the track, they're still big fans. The Scheres' Putaruru farm was keen to increase production and expand the farm. To achieve this, the team built a feed pad and started buying in feed.

However, to meet the increased demand they were placing on themselves, there came a need for better heat detection. Tail paint and scratch pads were far too time consuming and inaccurate. Allflex seemed the obvious choice.

With the feed pad increasing milk production by 50% and the winter milk price premium increasing, the operation has changed a lot over the 7 years that Thomas and Andrea have been on the farm. They now milk all year round. "Originally it was a 50/50 split between autumn and spring calving but now we calve 80% of our herd in autumn and 20% in spring."

The three man Putaruru farming operation traditionally had an empty rate of 11% - bang on the national average. While they

maintained the same empty rate, after the introduction of Allflex collars, they used 200 fewer straws. "As the old saying goes 'if in doubt put it up' however, the data that the collars give us eliminates any marginal calls, so this no longer applies. We know the collars give us accurate information on the optimal time to inseminate".

The first year Thomas and Andrea had the collars they also tail painted, however, it was more of a hindrance than help. "I said to dad if we are going to do this, we need to be all in, 100%, and trust the data the collars were giving us". Between calving twice a year and transitioning cows, the collars have been a great management tool for Thomas and his staff. "If a cow stops cycling we can tell pretty quickly that it's in calf prior to the vet coming out to pregnancy test".

"Allflex allows us to make fundamental decisions early - which ultimately helps our bottom line".

Thomas artificially breeds for twelve weeks total, nine weeks in autumn and three in spring. They then tail up with short gestation Hereford. Each cow is given two blocks at getting in calf, so if they don't get in calf in autumn they carry them over to spring. If they still don't get pregnant, they can confidently say it's a reproductive issue with that cow, not that they have missed the optimum cycle window.

While his father purchased the collars to help with heat detection, Thomas ultimately sees equal benefit with the daily health reports it provides him and his team. By bringing in 60%

of the feed, their cows are more prone to getting abomasal volvulus (a twisted gut).

However, the daily health report detects drops in rumination levels around 30 hours earlier than Thomas and his team otherwise would. This has resulted in fewer vet visits, and quicker recovery, which ultimately means more days in milk.

Thomas and Andrea have been using Allflex collars for seven years now and believe the longer you have the technology the more useful the information becomes. "We are now seeing patterns with cow's rumination levels and can take proactive measures early, avoiding a vet visit".

Over the years, the team has adapted to the technology, embracing the collars and the accurate data they provide. Thomas often comes into the office and the staff are looking over the health report - already making plans to draft out a cow or eyeball her in the paddock.

"It's a valuable tool to help our team to become better proactive farmers".

The collars also allow Thomas to have some much-needed time off with his family, during peak periods such as mating. He also loves that he can access the data from his phone anywhere, anytime - even when he is on holiday at Mount Maunganui with his family. Farmers don't believe him when he says there is only one man in the shed during mating. "I just tell them the collars do all the hard work, and pretty much run themselves".



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Livestock Intelligence

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