



CASE STUDY

Kevin and Cherie van der Poel

Kevin and Cherie van der Poel,
Alkemade Dairies Ltd
Location: Ohaupo, Waikato
Herd Size: 400 milking cows, Kiwi Cross (Holstein and Jersey)

Challenges

- Maximise heat identification and AI accuracy
- Increase milk production
- Automate monitoring to minimise daily involvement and reduce staffing needs
- Create a higher value herd

Benefits

- Estimated 30% higher milk production
- More accurate and less labour-intensive heat detection
- Earlier diagnosis of health and feed issues facilitates faster, more effective treatment
- Extra stock to sell, with more choice of which young stock to keep
- Access to farm data from any PC enables remote management and decision-making
- Overall added value of \$NZ 50,000 per year, from increased production and cost savings



Livestock Intelligence™

MSD Animal Health Intelligence

Alkemade Dairies yields more milk and creates a higher value herd with the SCR Heatime® Pro System.

Alkemade Dairies Limited in Ohaupo, Waikato, was acquired in 2015 by Kevin and Cherie van der Poel after many years dairy farming in New Zealand and the US. They continue to maintain the herd of 400 Kiwi Cross milking cows, whose diet is divided evenly between grass and supplements.

Upon taking over Alkemade Dairies, Kevin felt "there was place in this industry to bring in better monitoring of our herds, using technology that reduces time-consuming tasks and allows remote access to real-time information 24/7". He also wanted to automate procedures as much as possible to keep staffing requirements down. His conclusion: "A cow monitoring solution would make us more efficient and enable better monitoring in my absence."

Kevin purchased the SCR Heatime Pro System with HRLDn tags within a few months of acquiring the farm. He liked the information it provided. "It gives us rumination as well as activity monitoring, which we thought would give us great value." The basics of the SCR Heatime Pro System were easy to grasp from the get-go, though Kevin notes that two years in, "we're finding more and more automation in the system that we can use in our business." "Alkemade Dairies uses the SCR Heatime Pro System differently at different times of the year". During calving we're monitoring rumination on the whole herd, particularly our fresh cows to see how they're progressing, making sure they've

recovered before they go to the main herd," he says. "On a general basis, throughout the year we're looking at the health alerts, which alert us to any cows having any health issues. At breeding time we're looking at the Heat Report and linking our breeding program with that".

The SCR Heatime Pro System has been helpful in automating procedures and directing attention to where needed, based on any number of parameters. "The technology helps us identify which cows to look at and when to look at them, and then we do the diagnosis. It's the same with the breeding side". Kevin notes that while the Heatime System does the identifying, good stockmanship is required in order to determine what to do with the information.

Kevin has noticed that with the SCR system in place, heat detection is now more accurate compared to previous farms he's worked on. Instead of tail painting, data analysis is used, reducing both effort and the number of people involved, providing better results.

He also believes milk production is higher than it would be without the Heatime System. "We're producing 30% extra above the previous farm record. We took over the same farm and the same cows, so I don't know how much of it is due to my management, but the system is definitely helping me achieve these high levels, without me having to be here all day or every day".

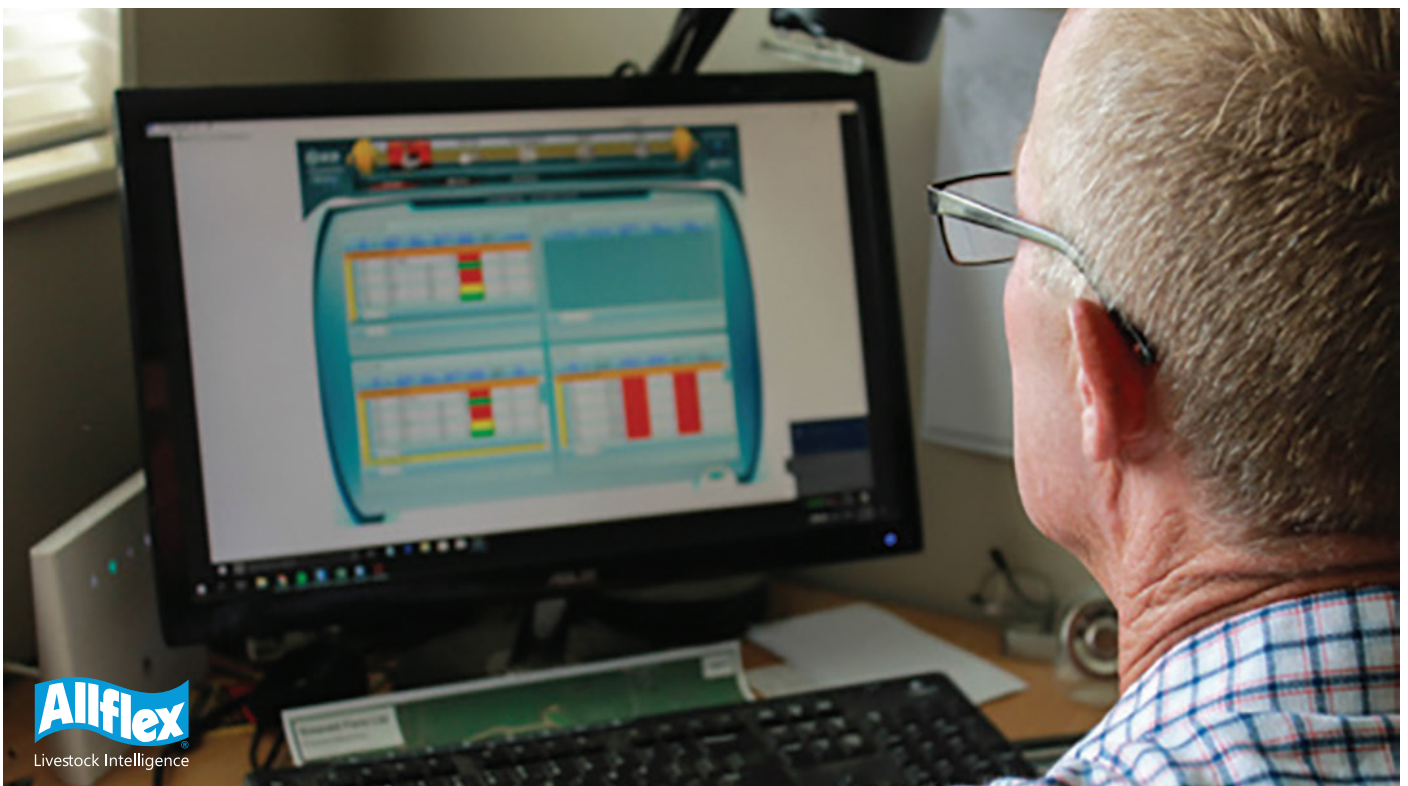
Beyond providing accurate data, the system gives Kevin nuanced insight into what is going on with his cows. "Heatime

creates and stores a history for each animal, and that helps us understand her process and her breeding cycles," he says. "We can see her rumination curve, whether it's steady or not. We also compare individual cows to the herd's rumination chart and then determine our feed rations to the herd – and then take it down to the individual level based on how she's performing. It will give us an alert if a cow drops dramatically from her norm so from that we understand she's not thriving in her group, and we can take action to remedy it".

In all, Kevin attributes about \$NZ 50,000 in value per year to Heatime. "We now AB (artificially breed) everything, creating a higher value in our herd. We don't need vets for pregnancy tests, which saves about \$5,000 a year and we also don't use vets to diagnose our cows. Therefore our cows produce better because we diagnose our animals and treat them more effectively. It also gives us extra options, creating extra stock to sell and letting us choose which young stock to keep. Plus, we don't have the hassle with bulls, which saves work".

As desired, Kevin can also take time off from the farm, without worrying. "For example, I was recently travelling overseas and my manager wasn't sure about something, so I was able to go online and assess some individual cows and give him some assistance, verify what he needed to do".

In fact, Kevin is so satisfied with the SCR Heatime Pro System that when he purchased a second farm nearby with 500 cows, he immediately installed the system. "Heatime will help me manage both farms without having to be there physically all the time".



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