

CowTime

CASE STUDY

Pits and People 2005



Milking became a lot less stressful, more relaxed and quicker, when Darren Fiebeiger made small changes after attending CowTime's Pits and People Shed Shake-up.

Small change, zero cost, big difference!

Milking in Darren Fiebeiger's dairy used to be stressful, involve lots of yelling, banging of poly pipe and constant chasing of cows. Thanks to *Pits and People*, CowTime's latest Shed Shake-up, milking is now a lot less stressful, more relaxed and quicker. All without spending a cent!

Darren and his parents, Roy and Geraldine, are partners in their property, Keywyn, in Keyneton, South Australia. Depending on how many people are in the dairy, it takes between two and three hours to milk the 180-cows in their 12-unit swingover dairy.

Darren says that their machine is very basic and getting a bit slow. He would like to speed up the milking process, perhaps by doubling up, but like most dairy farmers is hoping to see milk prices stabilise before he invests in new equipment.

In the meantime, he is open to any ideas that could make milking faster and less stressful.

"I enjoy milking, but I went to the Shed Shake-up hoping to pick up some tips to make things a bit better for us," Darren says.

The main change Darren made after attending the Shed Shake-up was to stop leaving the pit to chase cows into the dairy. Darren now lets the cows come in on their own accord.

"We don't chase cows in, we don't get the poly out and sometimes we leave the first and last space empty," Darren says.

Darren has found that letting the cows enter the dairy in their own time and pecking order has relieved much of the stress of milking.

"Milking is now a lot more casual with less racing around, especially when I'm milking by myself," Darren says.

An added bonus is that the milking process is faster, even with empty bails. "I'm not sure how much faster we're now milking. Perhaps it just feels faster because I'm less stressed," Darren says.

In any case, an investment of zero dollars to take the stress out of milking and make it feel faster is a good thing in Darren's opinion.

CowTime's Shed Shake-up was brought to South Australia by Dairy SA.



CowTime

Pits and People 2005

CowTime is the dairy industry's national learning package to make milking easier and more productive. Each year, CowTime develops a new theme around which extension messages are delivered.

In 2005, the theme was *Pits and People*, which focused on reducing the impact of milking on the body and mind, as well as ways to improve the milking routine.

The main vehicle for delivering the messages was through CowTime's popular Shed Shake-up format, which is based on a field day with a difference. The format of *Pits and People* involved a seminar presented by one of CowTime's technical experts, a DVD and exercise session, ideas from equipment suppliers and an on-farm visit.

Across the nation, 33 *Pits and People* Shed Shake-ups were delivered, which were attended by 812 people. Evaluation data* showed:

- 96% satisfaction rate;
- 60% of attendees made changes after attending and a further 10% are planning to;
- 97% of attendees found the information useful and relevant; and
- 88% approval rating for use of levy money.

Spreading the impact

CowTime's impact on the industry goes well beyond those attending Shed Shake-ups. The show bags and information handed out on the day have been used by 62% of attendees and will support further improvements over time.

Farmers continue to use CowTime's web-based resources, particularly the Milking Monitor service, Quick Notes and Guidelines. The program also received good support from the milk harvesting service sector, with 15 dealership, technical and field officers participating in the delivery.

**More information contact CowTime on
ph (03) 5624 2221 or visit www.cowtime.com.au.**



South Australia Regional Report

More than 69 people attended the three South Australian *Pits and People* Shed Shake-ups held in Meningie, Angaston and Mannum. They were presented by CowTime's Darold Klindworth and organised by SA Acting Regional Co-ordinator, Verity Ingham.

Feedback* was very positive with 98% of participants agreeing *Pits and People* was worth attending, and 95% saying the information presented was useful and practical. Like previous Shed Shake-ups, farmers attending *Pits and People* valued the new ideas and the opportunity for discussion and interaction.

Importantly, the effect of *Pits and People* goes beyond a discussion session. Most attendees (88%) from South Australia planned to make changes as a result of attending *Pits and People*. Changes included easing stressful situations, streamlining work routine times, and improving safety and working conditions and cow comfort.

Sponsors will be pleased to see that 88% of SA participants approved of the use of their levy money to develop this Shed Shake-up.

CowTime was delivered in South Australia with support from:



* Data presented has been compiled from feedback attendance records, feedback questionnaires and follow-up interviews (conducted by independent researcher, Down to Earth Research).

