

CowTime

CASE STUDY

Pits and People 2005



Adam Jenkins talks to Bevan Walker at the pilot of CowTime's Pits and People Shed Shake-up.

Say no to aches and pains

Since starting dairying farming near Cobden in June 2005, Adam Jenkins has found the milking routine can aggravate old sports injuries. But he's recently taken some simple steps that mean he's virtually eliminated the aches and pains that plagued him daily.

"There's no doubt that working on a concrete floor is hard on the body. But that's no reason to accept a lifetime of pain," Adam says.

The two things that he says have made a big difference are warming up before milking and wearing cushioned gum boots.

"I picked up the idea of warming up at '*Pits and People*' – CowTime's 2005 Shed Shake-up," he says.

Pits and People looks at the 'human element' of milking. It is all about reducing impact of milking on the mind and body and ways to improve work routine time and workplace health. A highlight of the event is an exercise session designed specially for dairy farmers.

"It might seem a little odd to warm up before milking but as a sportsman it makes perfect sense, so I've made it a habit," Adam says.

He has built the simple warming up exercises into his daily routine, so it doesn't actually take up any time.

"I've been doing some exercises demonstrated by the physio at *Pits and People* – simple things like stretching my fingers, hands and wrists. I can do these when I'm bringing the cows up to the dairy – while I'm sitting on the stationary motor bike waiting for the cows," Adam says.

Before milking Adam also does a few warm up exercises for his back and shoulder.

The other thing that has made a big difference is wearing cushioned gum boots. "They've made so much difference I'm going to buy my weekend milker a pair! They cost \$99 but save a lifetime of pain," he says.

Adam says he went along to *Pits and People* to get ideas for upgrading the dairy some time in the future so it was an added bonus to bring home ideas that could put into practice straight away – to make the dairy a more pleasant, user-friendly place to work.

"I've already saved about 10 minutes a milking by resisting chasing each row of cows into the dairy – cow-flow has improved and that means less stress on both the cow and the operator," he says.

CowTime's *Pits and People* Shed Shake-up was delivered in Western Victoria with support from WestVic Dairy.



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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.



Western Victoria and South-East South Australia Regional Report

More than 154 people attended the six Western Victorian and South-East South Australian *Pits and People* Shed Shake-ups held in Terang, Simpson, Colac, Koroit, Heywood and Mt Gambier. They were presented by CowTime's Darold Klindworth and Bill Morgan.

Feedback* was very positive, with 91% of participants agreeing that *Pits and People* was worth attending and 94% 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. Almost two out of every three attendees (66%) from the region 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 85% of these participants approved of the use of their levy money to develop this Shed Shake-up.

CowTime was delivered in Western Victoria 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).

