



Case study

Andrew Lester, Tasmania

Labour, lifestyle revolution

Saving 15 minutes a milking prompted Andrew Lester to completely re-think the farm's labour management and routine, which in turn revolutionised lifestyle for everyone involved. It all started with CowTime's Shorter Milking Secrets.

Andrew farms with his wife Angela and his parents Trevor and Clare at Herrick in north east Tasmania. The 270-cow spring calving herd is milked in a 26-aside herringbone with automatic cup removers.

Andrew agreed to try out CowTime's Shorter Milking Secrets because he was keen to have the dairy operating as efficiently as possible.

"At the peak of season each milking took about two hours and next season will be longer as we are expecting to expand to 300 milkers," said Andrew.

The secret is very simple: it is a waste of time waiting for slow milking cows to milk right out. CowTime calculated the Maximum Milk Out Time for Andrew's herd at the peak of season.

"What this means is that we should never leave the cups on a cow for more than about nine minutes," said Andrew.

Only about 10% of the herd takes longer than this anyway, so it only means taking the cups off a few cows before they are finished milking.

"We instantly saved about 15 minutes a milking which means going home early," said Andrew.

What I didn't expect was that a few minutes could have so much impact on our farming operations and our lifestyle," said Andrew.

Milking had always involved two operators, but it soon became obvious this was no longer needed. "Two operators was a bit of an overkill but it was hectic with a single operator until we saved that 15 minutes. Now it's very comfortable with just one milker," he said.

Freeing up a labour unit from the dairy meant that Trevor could reduce his involvement in milking which has improved his health.

It also meant that chores such as shifting the irrigation could be completed earlier in the day by the person who would previously been the second milker. And that's allowed Andrew to spend more time on other farming enterprises and a second farm.

"The big impact really was that it got me thinking outside the square," said Andrew.

Initial concerns about the potential impact on mastitis and milk production have proved unfounded.

The secret's out

Find out the secret to saving time in your dairy. Attend *Shorter Milking Secrets*, CowTime's 2007 Shed Shake-up, coming to your region soon.

Most Shorter Milking Secrets involve little or no cost but challenge current milking routines and practices.

You'll go home with your herd's Maximum Milk Out Time and a free timer to get started the very next milking.

For more information phone CowTime on 03 5624 2221.

CowTime is supported by Dairy Australia and DPI Vic. Your Dairy Services levy making milking easier.



Shorter Milking Secrets

- Cups on accounts for about 80% of the time a cow spends in the dairy so the trick is to maximise cluster throughput
- Removing the cups early from slow milking cows cuts milking time without compromising production or milk quality; The trick is to know your herd's Maximum Milk Out Time.

(based on research conducted by the National Milk Harvesting Centre, Ellinbank)

