

Genetics

AUSTRALIA

Breeding for Profit

Share Dairy Farmer of the Year Award 2008

Conducted by
The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and
The Victorian Agricultural Societies Association



RASV



SHOWING VICTORIA

In conjunction with
The United Dairy Farmers of Victoria



Victorian Farmers Federation

United Dairyfarmers of Victoria



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Genetics Australia Share Dairy Farmer of the Year 2008

The Share Dairy Farmer of the Year Award was initiated by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in 1979.

Aims

The aims of the competition are to:

- reward top sharefarmers for their contribution to productivity.

- encourage young farmers to the dairy industry.
- extend the performances of the top sharefarmers to others by way of a field day.
- lift the image of the sharefarming profession.
- encourage the formation of a good relationship between the share-farmer and the owner.

Awards

First prize

The title of Genetics Australia Share Dairy Farmer of the Year, semen to the value of \$3300, 12 month membership of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and a trophy.

Second prize

Semen to the value of \$2000 and a trophy.

Third prize

Semen to the value of \$1100 and a trophy.

Zone winners

Semen to the value of \$700 each.

Zone runners up

Trophies

Past competition winners

1979	Pat & Elsa Horan, Dumbalk
1980	Hank & Trish Hayden, Simpson
1981	Bruce & June McGregor, Dingee
1982	Ron & Wendy Costin, Nambrok
1983	Ross & Dianne Burke, Timboon
1984	Peter & Rosemary Mathieson, Whorouly
1985	Brian Walker, Boisdale
1986	Ian & Helen Herron, Gainsborough
1987	Gordon & Elaine Ailey, Heytesbury
1988	Gerard & Lynette Santamaria, Orbost
1989	Max & Heather Farley, Tallangatta
1990	John & Lyn Verstedden, Longwarry
1991	Wayne & Vickie Crole, Cobden
1992	Ian & Dale-Maree Florence, Kyabram
1993	Geoff & Debbie Evans, Toolong

1994	Gary & Samantha Owen, Budgeree
1995	Jamie & Anne Snell, Newry
1996	Wolfie & Kerrie Wagner, Bunyip North
1997	Geoff & Vicki Wickham, Nullawarre
1998	Stephen & Denise Cusack, Katunga
1999	Andrew & Carolyn Balfour, Willow Grove
2000	Brendan & Michelle Rea, Allansford
2001	Daryl & Leilani Hoey, Tallygaroopna
2002	Jason Leslie & Nicole Broadbent, Denison
2003	Kelvin & Lindy Bruce, Undera
2004	Mark & Tania Neville, Mepunga
2005	Barry & Megan Coster, Ripplebrook
2006	Ian & Alice Holloway, Gundowring North
2007	Wayne & Leah Brunt, Newry

2008 winners

State Prize Winners for 2008

Andrew & Joanne Theodore, Princetown	First Prize
Matthew & Joanne Broad, Cowwarr	Second Prize
Steven & Sally Fallon, Willow Grove	Third Prize
Ross & Anita Cook, Edi Upper	Livestock Management Award
Andrew & Nicole Griffiths, Tongala	Good total feed utilisation in drought conditions

Lucas & Kylie Liccardello, Kardella

Drought Recovery under a dry-land system

Bruce & Kylie Hill, Carpendeit

Pasture Improvement Award

Group Runners-up for 2008

Natalie and Adam Roberts, Camperdown
Second Place, South West Victoria
Region Judges: Kim Matthews and Joy O'Keeffe



For more information on the Genetics Australia Share Dairy Farmer of the Year Award contact:

- Zoe Moroz, Agricultural Events Coordinator, RASV
Tel: 03 9281 7412 or email: zoe.moroz@rasv.com.au
- Genetics Australia, freecall 1800 039 047 or www.genaust.com.au

Farm Owner: Tim and Lyndal Humphris

Effective ha of home farm	100 ha	Average annual rainfall	250mm approximately
Effective ha of run-off block	15 ha	Mating start date	November and June
Fodder conserved	Nil	Share agreement	50%
Irrigation water used	450 ML	Commenced sharefarming	July 1, 2004
Feed bought in	300t dm barley silage, 100t dm canola silage, 400t cereal hay, 40t dm canola meal, 500t barley grain		

Feeding

We are feeding to obtain maximum production to fully benefit current milk prices. We want to utilise our green feed while we've got it, and fill the feed gap with a combination of cereal hay and mixed grain in the bail. We employed a nutritionist who has created a feed budget and advised us throughout the drought.

Calf rearing

Heifer calves are raised in the shed until 10 weeks of age.

- They are fed two litres of fresh milk twice a day until 2 weeks of age, and have access to fresh water, mixed grain and oaten hay from day 1 to insure good rumen development
- At 2 weeks they are fed 4 litres once a day, to encourage more consumption of grain
- We continue this until 8 weeks of age, then we wean them off the milk if they are eating 1 kg or more of grain. At 10 weeks of age they are put on pasture with ad lib oaten hay and 3kg grain.

Calf rearing is a family affair.

Breeding program

We like our herd to have good capacity, longevity, high workabilities and good type. This criteria will ensure that our herd faults will slowly improve, and we will be able to build on some good cow families.

Also depending on budget we like to use progeny test semen which helps cut costs, and is a head start on future genetics.

We have implemented GeneScreen with Genetics Australia to prevent inbreeding and help select the best possible genetic combination for each individual cow.

We have introduced oestrous alerts when heat detecting. We have found that this is a big help in identifying cycling cows, especially second round joining.

Herd health

Calves are vaccinated with 7-in-1 before they leave the shed and then are administered booster shots accordingly. Cows are vaccinated every June. We vaccinate against BVD with Pestigard twice before joining in mid-September and mid-October.

Fluke and worms are prevented with Virbamec Plus in June, November and March.

We had a problem with salmonella, so we now vaccinate with Bovillis S to prevent this from happening at drying off and heifers get done twice before calving.

Any other health issues we treat as we see fit or contact the vet.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2004-05	330	2,301,208	4.09	94,204.17	3.26	75,180.35
2005-06	350	2,328,643	4.16	96,927.99	3.25	75,849.32
2006-07	290	1,898,842	4.15	78,707.49	3.24	61,440.62
Herd Test Figures (ave per cow)						
June 2005	328	7228		289		234
June 2006	342	7566		296		244
June 2007	284	7459		295		239
Production for each age group (current season)						
2-year-olds	33	6696		264		215
3-year-olds	55	7203		278		232
4-year-olds	43	7674		311		252
Mature cows	40	7733		307		247



Replacements

We aim to rear around 70-80 replacements each year, so we have the opportunity to cull, replace any losses, continue improving our herd, and increase our cow numbers to 400+.

Fertiliser

Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	100	500	0	0

Milking system

Cows are milked around 5.30am and again at 3.30pm in a 44-stand rotary dairy. They get fed 7kg in the bail per day and as they exit are teat sprayed with RTU Redene. Maximum milking time is around 2 hours.

Farm records

We are responsible for everything related to the running of the farm, so have access to all farm records.

We use Easy Dairy to record all our herd information and to download herd test results. Our feed budget is run on Microsoft Excel.

Our aim this year is to get Quickbooks up and running to keep a closer eye on our finances.

Lifestyle

We are very family-orientated and enjoy any outings with the children or socialising with friends. We both enjoy sport, reading and music.

Financial management

We deal with M&S Accounting services to do all our tax and utilise Murray Goulburn field services to work out farm budgets.

Making the most of the property

Depending on water allocation, we want to have pasture-based feed system with a stocking rate of 3.5 cows/ha. We will be using fertiliser and bail feed in maximum growing periods, to stretch rotations to create surplus grass so we are able to conserve fodder.

Also the run-off block will be used to run our replacements for the first 12 months, and again any surplus feed will be conserved.

Pasture and feed management

The water allocation has a lot to do with how we will manage our pastures, but we are intending to fertilise according to soil tests and agronomist's advice which works with our budget to obtain maximum yield. Paddock rotations are determined by growth rates and production. We have 20ha of lucerne, 40ha perennial pasture and 40ha annual pasture, which gives us even growing periods throughout the year.

Livestock management

Our aim is to have a healthy, high-productive herd.

Calf rearing, vaccinating programs and joining periods all contribute to this. So, if we stick to our feeding regimes and programs we should reach our goal.

Sharefarmer/owner relationship

We have weekly meetings to discuss any happenings or problems that have arisen on the farm or to the business, and work together as a team.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

Our passion is dairy farming, and would really love our children to be able to grow up on a farm, so our outlook for the future is to be positive.

Our biggest goal is to have our own farm and be milking our favourite cow families!

Family and leisure time

Our children really enjoy doing things on the farm together as a family. If we get time away we visit friends and family and just relax.

Community affairs and off-farm interests

Our eldest daughter has just started school, so we like to take an interest in her schools activities.

We all like watching and participating in sport, especially football, cricket and netball when time allows us. We also enjoy water activities and taking the children to the pool.

Gippsland: Matthew and Joanne Broad, Cowwarr

Farm Owners: Malcolm and Megan Stewart

Effective ha of home farm	65 ha	Irrigation water used	542ML
Effective ha of run-off block	110 ha, 25ha lucerne	Mating start date	1st October and 1st June
Average annual rainfall	575mm	Commenced sharefarming	July 2004
Fodder conserved from home farm	34t silage, 36t hay	Share agreement	45%
Fodder conserved from run-off block	27t dm pasture silage, 22t dm silage for calves, 243t dm lucerne hay		
Feed bought in	696t grain, 138t lucerne, 56t canola, 48t cereal hay, 28t straw		

Feeding

Analysis shows that home grown fodder is a key driver of profitability. On that basis our feeding strategy has always been to grow and consume as much home-grown fodder as possible – ryegrass (perennial and annual) as well as lucerne and maize silage in the past.

Previously we have achieved consumption of 17t dm/ha. This season we were hit by two separate floods and two-thirds of our milking area was affected, taking up to 8 weeks to resume normal growth. While these areas were unusable the cows were lot fed using lucerne and cereal hays. This left us with 11.18t dm/ha pasture consumption.

Our aim is to balance the home-grown fodder cost effectively with bought-in supplements to ensure animal health is optimised and our economic budgets are achieved. This season we supplemented with 2.32t custom grain mix and 1.2t dm of hay and silage per cow.

Pasture management and rotation is based on grazing at the three leaf stage. Maximising leaf area maximises pasture growth rates and balances minerals within the plant whilst achieving higher plant sugars.

Supplements such as custom grain rations allow us flexibility in dietary changes. Pastures and stored feeds are feed tested, and the diet is then weekly or as required; balanced using the latest computer modelling.

A key focus is animal health and cows are assessed for condition score, rumination, manure consistency and behavioural changes, to ensure observations are reinforcing dietary adjustments. Stability of the rumen is a key factor and therefore our aim is to keep the diet as consistent as possible throughout the year. Minimising potential health issues such as acidosis, ensuring dry matter intakes are maximised, foot health, udder health and reproduction is optimised.

Lead feeding was adopted four seasons ago. All cows are lead fed 15 days prior to calving using 4kg of crushed grain with anionic salts and organic minerals, and 7kg of cereal hay per day. This provides us with a smooth transition from the dry period to the lactation.

Calf rearing

We have recently improved our calf-rearing facilities. All replacements are raised under an eco shelter which provides young calves with a clean, dry and well ventilated environment. Calves are reared under a JDCAP program, cows are calved down on a sawdust calving pad which



is cleared at least twice a day. Within 3 hours of birth calves are tube fed with colostrum then given a multiminerall injection and their navels sprayed with iodine to minimise infection.

Replacement calves go into individual pens for 14 days and are fed twice a day. They have access to calf meal and straw and are bedded down on sawdust which is topped up once a week and completely changed before a pen is re-used to avoid cross contamination of any bacteria.

From two weeks old they go onto automated calf feeders in groups of up to 30 with up to 14 days age difference within each group. Calves have ad lib access to lucerne and a custom high protein grain mix until weaning at 10 weeks. At this time they are dehorned, drenched and injected with B12. They are then run on pasture where we also offer grain and straw for approximately six weeks to allow their rumen time to adjust to pasture.

Breeding program

With an intensive operation our long-term aim is to milk fewer cows, producing higher milk solids yield per cow. The herd could currently be described as medium-framed and therefore bulls are selected to add stature and capacity. Emphasis is also placed on type, vessels, milk, and positive components.

We maintain a portion of the herd as purebreds. Crossbreds are joined in a four-way program using Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss and Swedish Red. Our aim is introduce new genetics and enhance hybrid vigour compared with traditional two-way crossbreeding.

AI is carried out over a 6-week period and Matt performs all inseminations. Prior to joining we heat detect using tailpaint to determine any non-cycling cows. They are then treated using an Ov-synch program to maintain a high incalf rate. We aim to keep our calving period tight so after the AI period we use mop up bulls for a further 3 weeks.

Herd health

At dry off any cow that has had a clinical case of mastitis or a cell count of over 250,000 is treated with cepravin dry cow and the remainder are treated with teat seal. Special attention is paid to teat cleanliness to help keep post-calving mastitis to a minimum. Cows are also drenched for fluke and injected with 7-in-1 before a dry period of 7 to 8 weeks.

Prior to lead feed, cows are injected with a multimineral supplement to improve cow health and to help improve colostrum quality. After calving cows are drenched with Cydectin and given a B12 injection. Fresh cows are run in a separate herd for four days and stripped at milking to eliminate any mastitis cases. Clinical cases are treated with Orbenin LC. First colostrum milk is kept aside and potassium sorbate added to inhibit the growth of bacteria and maintain quality for tubing the calves.

Having a split-calving herd provides both fluke and worm control challenges so mid lactation the milking herd is treated with ivomec plus helping to eliminate recontamination of freshly calved cows.

We have a great rapport with our local vet. Animal health concerns, and observations are discussed and sick cattle treated promptly. Throughout the season we foot trim and also use additives in our grain ration which has all but eliminated lame cows.

Calves are vaccinated with 7-in-1, treated with a pour-on and fluke drenched three times in the first 12 months and then every 6 months.

Replacements

We aim to rear 70-80 replacements a year giving us ample scope to cull for high BMCC, low milk solids, yield and genetic weakness. Due to the past dry years we were down slightly on numbers so from Oct till March hosted 30 parked cows.

Replacements graze their own specific area because of the JDCAP program. Silage is harvested from these paddocks and fed adlib in hay rings. They are also fed 1-2 kg per day of a custom grain ration over the summer period to ensure adequate protein intake.

Fertiliser

Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	87	21	65	26

Milking system

The dairy is a 20-unit herringbone swing-over with stall gates and cablevey feed system. It allows single person operation, however a second person is utilised throughout the calving period. Milking times (including wash-up) vary from 2 to 3.5 hours during the peak season.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2004-05	300	1,876,836	4.73	88,862	3.51	65,930
2005-06	300	1,882,825	4.43	83,475	3.62	68,223
2006-07	225	1,662,941	4.31	71,699	3.45	57,360
2007-08	300	1,913,463	4.24	81,267	3.44	65,911
Herd Test Figures (ave per cow)						
2004-05	293	5967	4.6	276	3.6	213
2005-06	263	6270	4.4	276	3.6	227
2006-07	172	6569	4.3	284	3.6	234
2007-08	219	7264	4.1	300	3.5	258
Production for each age group (current season)						
2-year-olds 304 days	67	6691	3.9	263	3.6	238
3-year-olds 296 days	46	7168	4.2	304	3.6	257
4-year-olds 296 days	44	7912	4.2	330	3.5	277
Mature cows 288 days	62	7494	4.2	317	3.5	266

Farm records

We use Easy Dairy to maintain up-to-date data of all herd treatments, matings, calvings etc and to evaluate herd test results. We also run a large white board at the dairy to keep record of all paddock rotations, fertiliser applications, weed spraying and pasture renovations.

Lifestyle

From a family farming background, we made the move to dairying five years ago. We spent the first twelve months with an open mind assessing the industry, and 12 months later jumped at the opportunity of taking on a sharefarming role. Having developed a passion for the industry, we have taken every opportunity to participate in short courses and are involved in a local dairy group, Gippsland Grows Green Grass.

We have three great kids, Jessica 7, Kimberley 5 and Lachlan 3. As a family we all enjoy the outdoors and love to get away camping and visiting the beach. We also schedule at least two weeks each year for a holiday to catch up with distant family and friends.

Along with another local dairy farm, we job share a full time employee on a rotating weekly roster. We also employ a relief milker for one weekend every month to allow us to spend time with the children.

Financial management

We use QuickBooks. Each month both parties generate a reconciliation invoice to balance any owing monies to the other party. Each season we meet with Mal and Megan to draw up production budgets from which our personal financial budgets are derived. Throughout the season comparative profit and loss statements are generated to monitor performance.

We commenced on a 60/40 share owning 17% of the herd, our current arrangement is a 55/45 share owning 40% of the herd.

Making the most of the property

Over the past four years we have developed dry land into irrigated pasture, enabling us to increase herd numbers from 240 to a peak of 310. Annual pasture is sown and irrigated, extending our growing season to provide adequate feed for our autumn portion of the herd. Mid-season an adjoining 65 ha was purchased, 20 ha of this is irrigated lucerne and the remainder dryland. With the use of a diesel pump this area will also be added to the above milking area.

The lucerne has been oversown with oats for winter grazing and the production of cereal hay. In the future this should allow us to produce all fodder on farm to achieve our key feeding aim.

Sharefarmer/owner relationship

With Mal and Megan still living on the property running a commercial piggery, we have a very open and relaxed relationship. Rather than scheduled meetings we discuss ideas and issues as they arise. Mal still helps out during harvest and sowing time and also works on capital improvements.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

We share a very positive view on our future in the dairy industry and believe it offers us the opportunity to grow our asset base in order to fulfil our dreams. We thrive on the challenges and rewards of farming and as a family we enjoy the lifestyle it offers. Our long term goal is to secure a farm of our own.

Farm owner: Les Fox

Effective ha of home farm	148 ha	Irrigation water used	None
Effective ha of run-off block	80 ha	Commenced agreement	May 1 2004
Average annual rainfall	950 mm	Share agreement	67%
Mating start date	Autumn cows 6 June, Spring heifers 15th October, Spring cows 22nd October		
Fodder conserved from home farm	766 silage bales, 804 hay bales		
Feed bought in	410 t grain, 180 t cereal hay, 97 bales silage		

Feeding

Pasture is our main feed source, we also feed 1.2 tonnes of grain mix to top up essentials that the cows don't get from pasture. With this strategy we have been able to lift production per cow from 3696 to 5407 litres with higher components in four years. We're aiming to effectively utilise 2.4 tonnes per cow dry matter from pasture to further increase production per cow over the next twelve months.

Calf rearing

Our calf shed is a converted disused dairy with an automatic calf feeder. Grain is fed daily starting at 500g daily and by 5 weeks old up to 1kg daily. It takes one person about 20 minutes a day to check over and feed the calves. Cereal hay is fed ad lib.

Breeding program

We like to select sires from proven cow families. We like to see three or more generations of VHC or better based on ADHIS proofs. Sire selection follows our basic rules:

Milk	greater than +300	Protein	greater than +15
Fat	greater than +20	Temperament	greater than 100
Overall Type	greater than 100	Mammary	greater than 100

We use a mixture of Australian, American and Canadian proven sires. We will also select five progeny test sires to use each year. We use Easy Dairy to minimise in-breeding. We evaluate each cow through the milking season for areas of improvement. Genescreen and Breedplan are effective tools in giving us an outside perspective on our breeding strategies.

Cows are joined for the first six weeks with proven sires. Any return cows or slow-cycling cows are then joined to progeny test sires. Most yearling heifers are joined to progeny test sires.

Herd health

Cows are treated twice yearly January and June with Cydectin, injected with Clepto 7-in-1 in June, and Dry Cowed at drying off. Young stock receive Cydectin twice yearly, 7-in-1 and Vitamin B12 + Selenium. Calves receive Vitamin A, D and E at birth, Clepto 7-in-1 at 6 weeks and 12 weeks, and Vitamin B12 + Selenium at 12 weeks.

Replacements

We rear 90 replacement calves each year, 30 in the autumn and 60 in the spring. We have installed an automatic calf feeder. The objective of this exercise is to reduce time spent feeding calves, give calves better feeding ration and reduce the risk of disease and infection. At twelve months the weaners are sent to the recently acquired out paddock. They return home just prior to calving.

Fertiliser

Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	200	51	42	30

Milking system

The dairy is a renovated 12-a-side double-up herringbone with stall gates. Milking takes about 2½ hours in peak, milking about 140 an hour. Washing down the yard currently takes about an hour. This issue is being addressed with the installation of a flood wash system.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2004-05	254	938,875	4.71	45,282	3.64	35,019
2005-06	293	1,373,060	4.76	65,418	3.69	50,686



Lifestyle

We really enjoy our Jersey Club outings including on-farm challenges, farm walks and discussions. This gives us an opportunity to get ideas from other farmers regarding problems or ways to do things better.

Financial management

We put much of our income into herd and asset building, pasture renovation and farm infrastructure. This enables us to gain maximum farm potential in the shortest period of time. By carefully monitoring income and expenditure we are progressing to a stable financial position.

Making the most of the property

When we arrived on the farm in 2004 we found bent grass, bulrushes, seven troughs and some strands of wire pretending to be fences. It was a great opportunity to start from scratch. We have set about rebuilding the property and have made a difference.

Pasture and feed management

Pasture is managed on rotational grazing – we are still working at having a bulk residual after grazing. This is going to keep pasture establishment progressing. Most pasture has been sown over the past two years.

All silage is produced on farm, while some hay is cut elsewhere. Really poor quality paddocks have been sprayed out, Brassica sown and grazed, then sown to permanent pasture. This year to get some extra winter feed we have sown two unproductive paddocks to forage Triticale before sowing to Brassica in the spring.

Livestock management

We aim to keep our stock well fed. This helps with herd temperament and parasite distress. Temperament is a big issue in our management; quiet cows reduce detrimental effects in the herd i.e. cell count, injury, illness, stress for both cows and farmers, more efficient milking time.

Sharefarmer/Owner relationship

Our relationship with Les is positive. He encourages us to plan for the future. We discuss pros and cons of management but ultimately Les leaves farm management decisions to us. Les constantly makes himself available to help and support us. We don't ever recall Les having a negative attitude on any of the management decisions we have made. The positive relationship is the best asset the farm has.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

We have the attitude that if you work hard and put in the time you will get great reward out of what you have achieved and we aim to keep improving as we go on growing all the time and hope to purchase the farm in the future.

Family and leisure time

We enjoy going to the movies, family parties, preparing and showing cows, spending an afternoon with friends (BBQ, etc), board games, reading, golf and watching football.

Community affairs and off-farm interests

These include Jersey Club, Dairy Week, donating to charities (hay for bushfire appeal), Arthritis Foundation, bull nights and trade days. Kylie does a computer course, aromatherapy and beauty course. We help raise money for a warm water swimming pool for Cobden hospital by selling raffle tickets.

North-East: Ross and Anita Cook, Edi Upper

Farm owners: Robert and Pat Cook

Effective ha of home farm	195 ha	Feed bought in	900t pellets, 550 rolls hay
Effective ha of run-off block	122 ha	Mating start dates	20th May, 23rd October
Average annual rainfall	950 mm	Irrigation water used	650 ML
Fodder conserved from home farm	500 rolls silage, 150 rolls hay	Commenced agreement	1988 with 12%, then 1995 25%
Fodder conserved from run-off block	700 rolls silage, 250 rolls hay	Share agreement	25%

Feeding

Our cows are primarily fed pasture, they are supplemented hay and silage when pasture growth is restricted. Cows are bail fed pellets (2 tonnes per cow) including lead feed prior to calving. Cows are strip grazed with a 14-21 day rotation.

Calf rearing

Anita rears the calves in the spring with help from sister-in-law Brooke. 100-120 calves are reared in the spring, feeding colostrum for first 3 days then ab-lib cultured milk, also ab-lib hay and pellets for 4 weeks. Once a day feeding from there until 10-12 weeks. Ross rears 40-50 calves in the Autumn by hand. We recently purchased a Lely CALM Auto calf feeder. We finished off the Autumn calves but yet to do Spring calves. We rarely lose any calves.

Breeding program

Ross does all the bull selection, heat detection and AI. Mostly Australian proven bulls are selected with a small amount of overseas genetics. Bulls are selected on high APR and different bloodlines as well as calving ease for heifer joinings. We don't have a mop-up bull for the herd it is 100% AI. The heifers have one opportunity to AI and an Angus mop up bull is used.

Cows are joined primarily to correct traits and Genescreen report is used as a tool to help this process. This year we had five flushing programs, we flush high genetic merit animals with an aim of breeding superior heifers and also potential bulls for AI, this year five bulls have entered PT programs. We have also sold 10 bulls locally.

Herd health

At drying off we blanket Dry Cow the herd and teat seal any troublesome cows that continue to leak milk. Cows are culled for persistent mastitis, low production and temperament. 7-in-1 vaccine is given annually, all dry cows are treated for fluke, worms and lice at dry-off and for worms again in mid-lactation. We supply Murray Goulburn with premium milk and have premium milk awards for the past three years. We received a Weekly Times BMCC award in 2006, our cell count rarely exceeds 250. We have been working with a consultant to overcome some re-occurring mastitis problems, with success.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
Peak	421	3,670,654		142,555		119,074
Herd Test Figures						
Average	336	9178	3.6	334	3.2	298
Production for each age group (current season)						
2-year-olds	106	8293	3.6	296	3.2	268
3-year-olds	61	9459	3.6	342	3.3	308
4-year-olds	48	9905	3.6	357	3.3	324
Mature cows	121	9178	3.7	354	3.2	309



Replacements

All our heifer calves are reared and the lower genetic end of the heifers sold off. This year 35 heifers were sold averaging \$2200 each. The heifers are our future so they are looked after extremely well from birth to calving.

Fertiliser

180kg fodder booster for irrigation twice a year, dry land (home and run off), 250kg 4-in-1 super potash in Autumn, hay paddocks an extra 180kg pasture booster in early spring when they are shut up. Strategic use of nitrogen (Urea) when coming up to possible feed shortage 80kg per ha.

Milking system

The dairy is a 50-stand rotary and milking time at the peak is about 2 hours. We are at the moment upgrading to auto ID/draft/individual feeding/heat detection which will cut our workload down. Ross does all the milking with a relief milker seven days a week and has backup from Steven when necessary, especially during calving when both Ross and Steven milk. We herd test monthly.

Farm records

Anita handles all the cattle records using Easy Dairy. Herd test info, matings, animal health and stud registrations are entered into this program. All registration and DNA samples are completed by Anita.

Finance

We pay our own farm expenses e.g. HFAA and flushing. Other farm accounts are held by the owner, we pay 25% of most the other accounts including dairy improvements, irrigation upgrades, vet and fodder etc.

Lifestyle

We enjoy visiting family and friends and having family days out maybe just a picnic down at the river. Ross enjoys getting down to Melbourne with the boys to support the Kangaroos, Anita enjoys playing netball and we both enjoy being a part of community events. We always attend dairy week for two days for the Holstein judging and the sales.

Financial management

Anita handles all of our financial records with the help of our accountant.

Making the most of the property

We try to use most of the home property for the milking cows, some of the young stock are agisted locally and all the others are on run-off block. All the dry cows are moved off the milking area.

Pasture and feed management

The milking area is renovated every 4-6 years with perennial pastures and all dry country is oversown with short rotation ryegrass in Autumn for maximum yields. 80 ha of irrigation is all flood irrigation, with hard-hosed electric, travelling and permanent upright irrigation.

Livestock management

Years spent weighing animals have now given Ross experience to visually knowing how the heifers are going. We pride ourselves in growing healthy heifers from birth to calving that are ready to work for us.

Sharefarmer/owner relationship

Unique relationship as a family affair, Ross's parents are very supportive of us and are there to help when ever needed.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

We hope to always be improving the genetics of the herd, this year we are equal 14th on ABV in Australia and have each year improved dramatically. With the base of cows that we own now we are hoping to work with them and make them and our stud name 'Country Road' well known. Dairying is our love and our life we are very passionate about always looking to improve and always willing to listen and learn.

Family and leisure time

Love spending time with our four children whether at home or away, Our two older boys started Auskick this year and one plays tennis. We have two weeks holidays in January on the coast each year and take a weekend away in the winter.

Community affairs and off-farm interests

Ross is involved in our local primary school as School council president, he is a north-east delegate for HFAA, a committee member for GMW for the King River and is a volunteer fire fighter. Anita is Parents Association president for our school. Involved in fundraising for struggling local kinder raising \$20,000 in the past two years. Anita also loves cooking making hundreds of preserves for fundraising for school fair, and as a hobby loves wedding floristry and gardening.

Farm dynamics

Robert and Pat Cook, Semi-retired 50% share (Ross's parents)

Robert and Pat help out where ever needed, cows are bought in night and morning.

Steven and Brooke Cook 25% share (Ross's brother)

Steve is the machinery man he does 90% of the irrigation, pasture renovation, hay and silage, super/lime application and maintenance on the dairy and equipment, and is also involved in milking and cattle work when help is needed. Brooke helps with the calf rearing.

South Gippsland: Lucas and Kylie Liccardello, Kardella

Farm owner: Michael Malone

Effective ha of home farm	130 ha	Feed bought in	500t grain, 128t hay
Effective ha of run-off block	33 ha	Mating start dates	25th July
Average annual rainfall	700 mm	Irrigation water used	Nil
Fodder conserved from home farm	300 rolls silage, 100 rolls hay	Commenced agreement	1st May 2006
Fodder conserved from run-off block	400 rolls silage, 80 rolls hay	Share agreement	50%

Feeding

Two tonnes of grain per cow with a pasture base. Targeting 530kg total milk solids.

Calf rearing

One labour unit. Milk until 100kg live weight, then wean onto grain, hay and grass.

Breeding program

AI for 8 weeks, then registered stud bulls to mop-up.

Herd breeding

Five-year target of minimum APR of 100. Above average for type and mammary to try achieve and a balanced cow with the ability to produce high amounts of milk solids.

Herd health

Cleanliness to avoid spread of bacteria and disease.

Replacements

Rear all female calves, trying to achieve a closed herd. Monitor growth to achieve the full potential from genetics. AI Holstein bull to Holstein heifer and Jersey bull to Jersey heifer.

Fertiliser

No large application of fertiliser this year, just the following mix spread at 120kg/ha.



Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	33	3	8	0

Milking system

18 unit swing-over, with auto cup removers. Twice a day milking, 7 hours a day spent in shed (4 hours morning and 3 hours evening)

Farm records

We are responsible for all farm records. We use the Mistro program.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2007-08	230	1,607,570	4.14	66,576	3.32	53,352
Herd Test Figures						
2007-08	218	6967	3.8	266	3.3	232
Production for each age group (current season)						
2-year-olds	38	5572	3.7	208	3.3	186
3-year-olds	29	5899	3.8	226	3.4	200
4-year-olds	27	7578	3.7	284	3.4	256
Mature cows	124	7511	3.9	290	3.3	248

Financial management

We work closely with our accountant and have regular visits with a farm consultant.

Making the most of the property

With better seasonal conditions, we are aiming to increase cow numbers to 300.

Pasture and feed management

Our aim is for more pasture, less concentrate and the same production.

Livestock management

Cull high cell count and mature cows, aiming for a younger herd.

Sharefarmer/owner relationship

Fantastic! We have common goals and interests.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

We have a positive attitude towards dairying and are aiming for farm ownership.

Family and leisure time

Majority of our family time is spent on the farm. With better staff management we are aiming for better balance.

Community affairs and off-farm interests

We are involved in local community events.

West Gippsland: Steve and Sally Fallon, Willow Grove

Farm owners: Geoff and Elly Fallon

Effective ha of home farm	80 ha	Feed bought in	111t grain
Effective ha of run-off block	30 ha	Mating start dates	1st October
Average annual rainfall	700 mm	Irrigation water used	50 ML
Fodder conserved from home farm	500 rolls silage, 80 rolls hay	Commenced agreement	1st July 2003
Fodder conserved from run-off block	220 rolls silage, 110 rolls hay	Share agreement	50%

Feeding

Regular walks of the farm are done to calculate growth rates and pasture availability and quality to ensure the best pasture for maximum production with minimal inputs.

We graze pasture at the 3-leaf stage, except for in spring where it is back to 2½ leaf stage to maximise quality. In the previous 3 years before the 2006-07 season, which was a drought, we have averaged 11.3 tonnes/ha pasture consumption. In 2006-07 year it has dropped to 9.5 tonne/ha due to the drought.

Pasture is measured in cow days and we set a start of calving target of over 2500 cow days available which we have done every year to be able to fully feed the cows at the start of calving.

Calf rearing

Calves are brought in 12 hours after birth and heifer calves are stomach tubed 2 litres of colostrum. Calves are reared in a shed in groups of 12 on buckets, fed 4 litres once a day with ad lib grain with 21% protein, plus hay.

They are weaned at 8-10 weeks (approx 100kg), then put in calf paddocks and fed grain, hay and grass. Calves are fed grain until 10 months of age and silage during the summer months. Calves are reared under the JDCAP program.

Breeding program

We use an evaluation program, in which the bulls are selected on type, components, APR, udder attachment, teat placement and fertility. This year we also went for more strength.

We try to spend extra on proven semen, as we believe spending around \$26 is a good investment. We visually heat detect prior to joining and at the start of joining we use Kamars and then tailpaint after they are joined.

After 7 days of joining any cow that hasn't come on heat is given prostaglandin.



Herd breeding policy

We ensure that the correct bulls are selected dependent on the evaluation of each individual cow. The cows are joined for 7 days and then PG'd to keep a tight calving pattern and give most cows the opportunity to be inseminated twice with AI only just going over 4 weeks. Non-cycling cows are given CIDRs.

Herd health

We ensure the cows are in good condition at calving and fed Causmag to help reduce the incidence of milk fever. They are fed well after calving to maintain condition and increase production. Cows are blanket Dry-Cowed and vaccinated with 7-in-1. Wide lane ways are maintained to ensure cows don't get sore feet. Cows are monitored closely and anything out of the ordinary is dealt with quickly and veterinary attention is given if required to ensure a quick recovery.

Replacements

Approximately 50 calves are kept each year in the calf rearing area with the JDCAP. The yearlings are on a run-off block. Heifers are regularly drenched and given selenium and cobalt bullets on a yearly basis.

Fertiliser

Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	300	10	60	36

Milking system

Cows are milked in a 22 swing-over herringbone shed, with milking taking 1½ hours plus washing up in the spring to milk 200 cows, which is done with one person plus a relief milker on Sundays. We installed a yard blaster to minimise time washing the yard, which now takes about 2 minutes.

Farm records

We are responsible for all records including breeding records, fertilizer records and all paddock records. We are currently involved in the Accounting for Nutrients program, which runs for two years through the DPI. We use Cashflow Manager and Excel to record our financials. We also use Mistro for records of our cows and are currently in the process of utilising a program provided by Murray Goulburn called MG Farm, which assists with the management of milk production and quality, as well as estimating income.

Lifestyle

We now have a 2-year-old son who takes up a lot of our time and have a baby due in November. Our family outings consist of swimming, playing tennis, watching football, playing mixed netball, indoor cricket, playing golf, visiting family and friends, gardening, breeding birds and going to the beach.

Financial management

This year we have tried to maximise milk production to take advantage of the attractive milk prices. We have achieved this by maximising pasture consumption and being as profitable as possible. We belong to an AGChallenge Discussion Group, which is facilitated by Geoff Urie, which provides us with monthly data on milk income and feed costs per cow and return per ha. We also complete a farm Financial Analysis each year to compare against ourselves and others and also to see our assets increasing.

Making the most of the property

When we started on this farm, before we started sharefarming, the farm was very run down with very big paddocks and bent grass and paspalum pastures, which we have now re-sown to all new pasture by cropping and cultivating paddocks and putting the best new rye grass pasture in. We have also split up a lot of the paddocks, planted

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2006	185	881,525	4.07	35,888	3.25	28,324
2007	180	921,482	4.09	37,756	3.21	29,552
2008	200	1,040,591	4.19	43,680	3.22	33,488

West: Andrew and Joanne Theodore, Princetown

Farm owner: Martin Van De Wouw

Effective ha of home farm	150 ha	Feed bought in	341 t pellets, 20t hay
Effective ha of run-off block	70 ha	Mating start dates	25th July
Average annual rainfall	900 mm	Irrigation water used	Nil
Fodder conserved from home farm	700 rolls silage, 60 rolls hay	Commenced agreement	April 2006
Fodder conserved from run-off block	65 rolls silage, 195 rolls hay	Share agreement	50%

Feeding

The main aim is to utilise pasture and to grow as much as possible. We strip graze every paddock for the milking herd. They receive 2 ha/day of pasture and 3 kg in the bale. During the year the rotation of the pasture varies from the leaf stage of the plant. We use Coprice pellets

thousands of trees, implemented fertiliser programs, put in an irrigation system, and built a new dairy shed so we could milk more cows. We have increased pasture consumption from approximately 5 tonnes to 11.5 tonnes without any really good seasons.

Pasture and feed management

Cows are fed on pasture-based system with start-of-calving targets and total pasture consumptions set. Every time the cows come out of a paddock moisture provided urea is put on at 80–100kg/ha to maximise growth. Silage is cut when pasture growth exceeds consumption during spring and topping is also done normally in thirds of paddocks each round. Last season we cut 32 out of 36 paddocks for hay or silage and three paddocks twice to keep maximum growth and pasture quality.

Livestock management

Cows are fed on pasture-based system with minimal inputs and are calved down over a 9-week period and are dry for 7 weeks. Any cow that gets mastitis three times is sold. Being able to know each and every cow from any angle makes it very easy to notice if anything is wrong with a cow or to tell from a distance if a cow is on heat. Herd testing also contributes a lot to the udder health and individual cow production, which assists in the management of the cows. Calves and heifers are strip grazed and rotated around their selected areas and grain and silage inputs are put in when required.

Sharefarmer-owner relationship

We have an excellent relationship with Steve's parents. They have total faith in what we do and give 100% support to decisions that we make regarding the management and running of the farm. Regular discussions are held regarding what is happening on the farm and our plans.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

After making the most of the season and milk price, we have achieved our dream goal of purchasing the farm we have been sharefarming on for five years, which now gives us more drive to expand if and when the opportunity arises and do this with confidence. We have done it before, so we can do it again. This year we are expanding our herd numbers to 230 cows. We think that dairy farming has a positive future and think it is a great lifestyle for families.

Family and leisure time

As we have a relief milker on Sundays we make sure that we have a break and spend the day away from the farm doing the activities we have noted earlier. Family time is also spent on the farm doing chores together such as going for a ride on the motorbike, shifting fences, bringing the cows up for milking or going for a ride in the tractor to feed hay and silage and feeding calves.

Community affairs and off-farm interests

We are members of UDV and a local Farm Discussion Group (AG Challenge) and are also involved in YDDP.



Calf rearing

Calves are taken off mothers 12–24 hrs after calving, given colostrum from fresh cows and 5 litres milk per day. We transfer calves to drink out of the trough at about 10 days, give ad lib pellets and fresh clean water at all times. All calves are weaned off milk at 6–8 weeks.

Milk is pumped from the dairy pit at end of milking (milk collected through test buckets and placed in barrel) it goes underground to the calf shed and is delivered by hose to the calves. This saves manually carrying buckets, so that the labour is made easier and it runs more efficiently.

Breeding program

We use AI proven bulls selected from Genetics Australia. Progeny Test semen is also used. Good milking speed, temperament, SCC and good sound legs are a priority when selecting bulls. The aim is to continue breeding so that we keep a good reliable milking herd with production that keeps on improving with each generation.

Mop-up bulls are used: Holstein for the milking herd and Jersey for the maiden heifers for easy first calving. We also use Genescreen, with the added service, knowledge and advice of Lisa Bell from Genetics Australia Terang. By completing the 'InCalf' course through Timboon Vet Group with Dr Peter Younis, we have gained knowledge of how better to improve our herd fertility, tighten our calving pattern, manage the cows to be in better condition at mating and achieve genetics through the herd for the long-term benefit of the business.

Herd health

We herd test every six weeks so that we can stay fully informed about the herd. We can identify problem cases of mastitis quickly and also gain information regarding litres produced, fat, protein, and generally how well the herd is producing.

We have mastitis detectors in the milk lines to constantly check for any cases. Cows are given three opportunities to cure infections then sold if not resolved. At the moment our BMCC is currently around 150,000. Ready-to-use teat spray is always used on herd after milking. Teat seal and antibiotic drugs are used for drying off. Any cows with a cell count of less than 250,000 are treated with teat seal and ones that are over 250,000, and or been treated, have Juroclox used with teat seal.

We vaccinate all cattle with 7-in-1 annually and we also drench and lice treat all cattle at appropriate times throughout the year. Any lame cows with incorrect hoof alignment are trimmed.

Replacements

We rear 25% of the number of the milking herd each year. Calves are fed pellets through the first summer. We weigh them every 4 months to make sure that they are achieving calving weight of around 500 kg. We use Double PG program during joining using easy calving AI bulls. As they start springing we lead feed them through the dairy to get them used to the yard and to walk through better. Replacements start calving three weeks earlier than the milking herd. Calving starts 25th April.

Fertilisers

We complete soil tests yearly on selected paddocks and use the results to guide us on which nutrients to apply over both the farm and the out-paddock. We work up a nutrient budget and with our advisors, determine the nutrients needed from those results. Our Fertiliser use this season was maintenance-only as our Olson P and Potassium levels were quite adequate for pasture nutrient requirements. The Olsen P

was 30 plus and Skene K was over 200. The application below is split half in May and half in Spring.

Fertiliser used	N	P	K	S
kg/ha	100	16	30	8

Last year nitrogen was spread every six weeks between June and August. This year, as prices have skyrocketed, we are researching information to see if there are other sources of nitrogen that can be used to deliver similar results for the pasture. We also had the dairy effluent tested to determine its exact nutrient value. We spread this over selected paddocks of the farm as well as crops.

Milking system

Our milking shed is a 20 aside swing-over with third line wash system, head bales and auto feed system. A Yard Blaster installed recently and the yard has been extended.

Milking in the morning starts at 6am and is completed by 7.30am. The afternoon milking starts at 4pm and is usually done by 5.30pm. Depending on numbers, we both milk together morning and night.

All fresh cows have yellow tape on their tails to identify them so their milk is collected for the calves. All treated cows for mastitis have red tape on their tails, a red cross sprayed on their udder as well as a red leg band on their leg. Any 3 teater cows have a green leg band on their leg. This way all cows are identified, no mistakes are made and it is an easy workable, practical system for both of us.

Farm records

We have all cattle recorded on Mistro. We also have a Palm Pilot that makes it easier to record information on calving, treating cows, pastures etc. It is then downloaded straight onto the computer. Our herd test records are sent via satellite internet and stored automatically in Mistro, making it quick and efficient to receive our information. It is also sent to us via the post. Wall charts at the dairy identify calving and joining. Treatment records are recorded in the Murray Goulburn Milk Care Policy Sheet. All cattle are freeze branded and brass ear tags inserted as well as normal ear tags to make identifying numbers and records easier.

Financial management

The finances are managed according to our written contract. We have 100% responsibility for the bills of the herd e.g. vet, vaccination, herd health etc. We have 50:50 bills for feed costs, contracted labour, herd test etc. Any 50:50 bills are invoiced to each other and paid separately.

We do 'Taking Stock' budgets and regularly monitor them to make sure we are on track. We make sure we get estimates printed out from Murray Goulburn so we have a budget to work around. We do our own BAS, use Bank link with the accountant (to help cut costs), and we compile all records and dissections, then send it through to the accountant to check it over and process.

Making the most of the property

We are working towards making the most of the property by maximising pasture consumption and using bought-in supplements to maximise cow efficiency and reduce overgrazing of pastures. We always strip graze every paddock for the milking herd. The rotation of the farm at the moment is 55 days using the three-leaf stage.

We gain information from Helen Chenoweth and Michelle Ryan from Warrnambool DPI to make sure we are managing our business in the best possible way. We attend discussion Groups such as the local Port Campbell group to further gain knowledge, toss around ideas and gather new information. We always aim to attend information sessions such as any sharefarmer seminars, fertiliser or cow nutrition sessions, and completed both the *InCalf* and *Feeding Pastures for Profit* program.

We don't have set day or night paddocks so this ensures that nutrients are spread more evenly over all pasture. The effluent is spread not only as a fertiliser but also it is a cost-effective way to gain nutrients. We do 4–6 soil tests annually so we know exactly what nutrients are needed and are not wasting money on unnecessary nutrients.

We have improved pastures by over-sowing newer varieties of perennial and annual rye grasses to maximise low cost pasture production. We get advice from local agronomist Andrew Alsop, who visits the farm when needed and provides useful input into our program. Andrew Theodore completed his farm apprenticeship in 1989 and participated in an International Agricultural Exchange program to Denmark in 1992. Andrew has completed numerous courses and is close to completing his Diploma of Agriculture.

Pasture and feed management

We are strongly and clearly focused on growing and using as much low-cost pasture as possible to achieve highly profitable milk production. Pasture management is by strip grazing every day and, during spring, cows are allocated two equal amounts of feed. We also strive to ensure that pasture doesn't become rank and therefore wasted at that time. Grazing per paddock and this information used in conjunction with the *Feeding Pastures for Profit Right* tool. Poorer or bent grass paddocks are identified early to over sow with annual ryegrass, then followed with a summer crop. Cultivation is by deep ripping then power harrowing and seeding.

In autumn permanent grasses are direct drilled. Using a sacrifice area over summer allows a night time rotation of over 60 nights and this allows lower fertility paddocks to build up nutrients and assists newer species to survive through the summer months. New grasses are planted in Autumn and 20 ha of summer crop is planted annually, with a further 40 ha over sown.

Feed management is crucial to ensure all excess feed is conserved on the property is used to its fullest potential. A feed budget is done to determine feed on hand and is monitored regularly. Hay and silage is weighed and feed tested to determine its value and to make sure all cattle are getting adequate amounts of energy and protein requirements.

Livestock management

Livestock management is done in accordance with the Murray Goulburn Milk Care Policy and we handle all livestock with due care. Calves have their own paddocks away from the dairy and the mature cattle to reduce diseases before been taken to the outpaddock.

Sharefarmer/owner relationship

Our relationship with Martin Van De Wouw is one of communication, goal setting, understanding, trust and an openness to examine new ideas and ways of making the property run more efficiently. Upon deciding to expand the number of the herd we came up with ideas of how to achieve this. Working together we have succeeded in expanding the numbers and making it work efficiently. The laneways of the property have been updated to ensure even flow of cattle. Better varieties of pasture have also been sown at the outpaddock to ensure maximum quality for silage and hay to be cut there in the coming season. Instead of leasing or agisting any extra land we have decided to make the most of the land which we have and put our resources into achieving a better outcome. The milking yard has been extended as the herd numbers have increased in the past two years. A yard blaster has been installed to make water use and time more efficient.

The dams have been dug out more to improve water catchment. A new silo been installed next to the calf shed to make calve feeding more efficient.

We are extremely lucky to have Martin as a business partner. Together we discuss all aspects of a new project or idea, listen to each other and come to an agreement on the way to go about it. Martin has always given guidance, encouragement and praise for all our hard work and

is always willing to support new ideas or ways to improve things and to strive forward with us.

Attitude to dairying and aims for the future

The farming lifestyle is a fabulous one and great for raising children. We love dairy farming: we see our results and are proud of our achievements. We are always searching for information in the industry to make sure we are well informed on new strategies. Dairying is an industry where you have to find the right employer who is willing to step back and let a couple move forward. They also have to be able to accept new farming practices and changes in the dairy industry.

We originally commenced work with Martin by running his outpaddock for him as we worked on a farm close by. As we saw the potential in his outpaddock and were wanting to move forward in the dairy industry we approached him with written scenarios of how it may work. After lengthy discussions and ideas we came up with our arrangement and neither of us have looked back.

When a successful partnership is found the rewards can be profitable for both the owners and share farmer. We promoted ourselves to Martin on how we could work together as a share farming business partnership. Now four years later we have acquired equity in the herd and machinery. This was our first goal and we are there. Now we aim to finish paying off our cattle then we continue to strive forward to have our own farm property. We will continue on in the industry and encourage other younger people to give it a go.

Lifestyle

We have two children, Luke 14 years old and Hollie 12 years old. Andrew grew up on a dairy farm and has farmed throughout his life. Joanne grew up in the city and together we are actively involved in the dairy business and farm life. The children are involved in day-to-day activities and chores of the farm and enjoy the lifestyle.

As a family we all contribute and although we have to make sacrifices, as farming is 7 days a week year-round, we are settled and committed to achieving our long-term goals.

Our family time is spent together with activities like barbeques, beach walks, badminton, basketball and attending concerts. Interests are footy, cricket, kids functions or local events, school events and social sports.

We thoroughly enjoy our annual holiday of around 10 days to places such as Tasmania and Queensland. This is only been possible after we found a great, reliable relief milking couple. We have built a strong relationship with them and we treat them as we would expect to be treated, praising their efforts for continuing the hard work while we have our vacation.

We also enjoy catching up with our friends and close relatives in Melbourne and going out for lunch. Luckily, as we are restricted in travel movements for most of the season, we have great friends and family who come to stay with us, enjoying a night under the stars around a bonfire and letting the city kids enjoy our lifestyle while we all catch up.

Herd production

Season (production year)	No. of cows	Milk (L)	Fat (%)	Fat (kg)	Prot (%)	Prot (kg)
Factory Figures						
2005-06	170	976,130	4.0	39,320	3.1	31,532
2006-07	210	1,302,440	4.0	52,293	3.2	42,103
2007-08	250	1,403,670	4.5	58,268	3.4	45,846
Herd Test Figures						
2006	149	8491	4.2	330	3.2	272
2007	129	8772	4.6	288	3.6	348
2008	179	6371	3.9	250	3.9	208
Production for each age group (current season 245 days)						
2-year-olds	50	5396	4.0	217	3.2	177
3-year-olds	24	5875	3.9	226	3.2	188
4-year-olds	23	5652	3.9	210	3.2	184
Mature cows	82	6401	3.9	251	3.2	207