

Herd Homes builds on stronger trusses

STRONGER ROOF trusses are allowing Herd Homes to span up to 20m, so farms can retro-fit the Waikato firm's roofs over existing yards and pads.

"It's allowed us to cover feed pads, dairy yards and our Herd Homes," chief executive Hamish McMillan told *Dairy News* at the recent South Island Agricultural Field Days, Lincoln.

The old design was adapted from glasshouse roofing using light steel and came in one width – 10.3m. The new design uses cold-rolled steel and can be made to fit up to nearly twice that, he explained. "It's a lot more robust. We're building the first half dozen now."

One is being installed near Mata-mata and four more are destined for a farm near Balclutha, Otago.

McMillan says there are about 350 Herd Homes nationwide and more going in all the time. "It tends to go in clusters."

The main appeal is protecting pas-



ture from damage during wet weather, and being able to manage effluent produced off-paddock efficiently and simply.

Effluent collects in a sump below a Herd Home's slatted floor which once or twice a year is removed so a loader can drive through to dig out the muck for loading into a spreader to go out onto the farm.

"The effluent management is very simple. There are no scrapers or anything to breakdown."

Capital cost per cow is typically \$1500-1800. McMillan says the plastic roof cover might need replacing after 7-8 years, which for a 200-cow unit currently costs about \$6000, but everything else is designed to last at least 50 years.