

Farm Dairies & Equipment

Just better

Dairying Today Oct 2006

Slatted floors all the way to cups

Tony Hopkinson

A NEW, covered milking platform from Herd Homes has a slatted floor on which cows stand during milking.

Herd Homes Dairyard was launched late September at a field day at Mata, 20km south of Whangarei.

The shed had been subject to a supervised trial for two years with stringent parameters controlled by Fonterra, AgResearch and NZ Food Safety Authority. In the year before the trial regular tests of milk quality were taken as a base for the trial results.

A Fonterra representative told field day visitors milk quality during the trial had been of a consistently high standard and all requirements had been

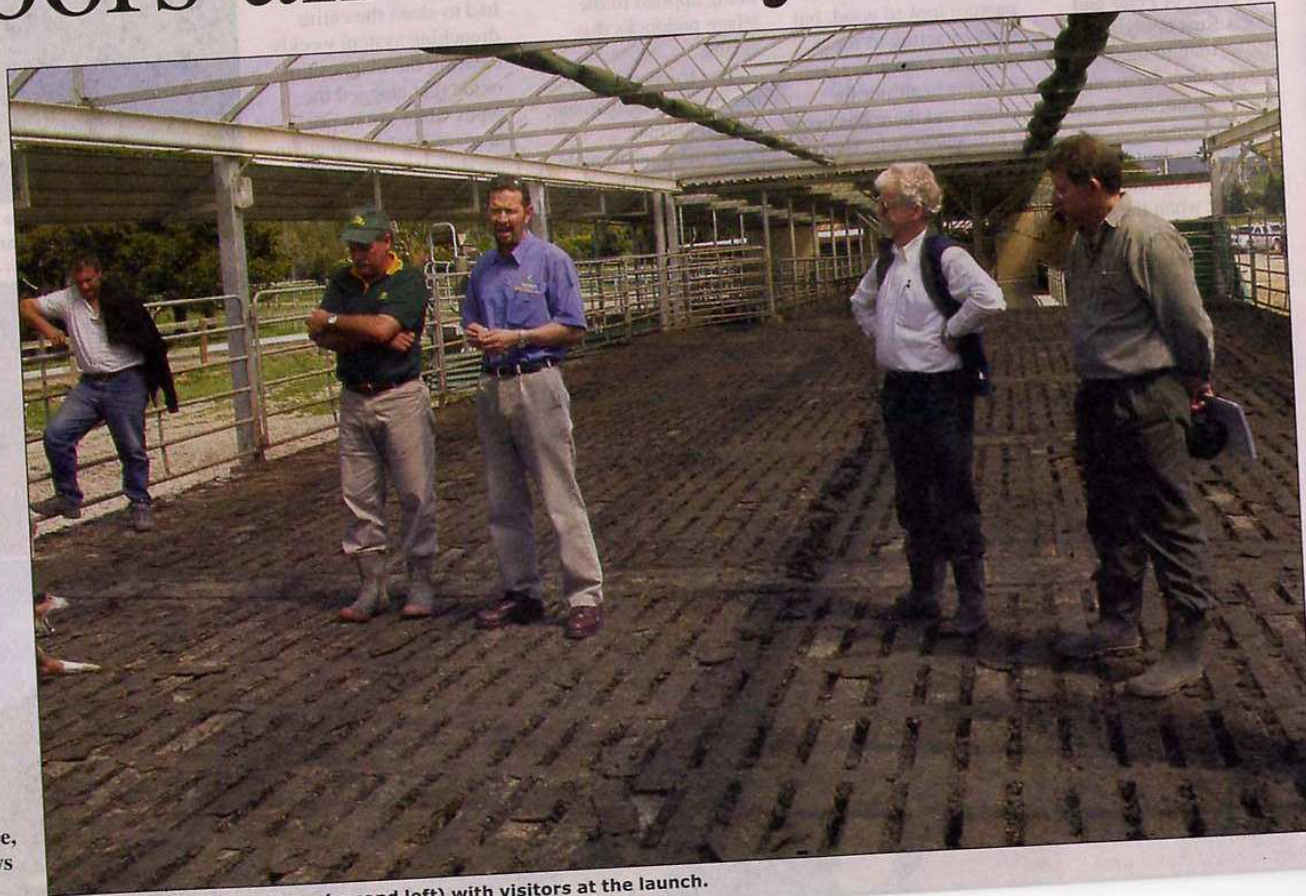
complied with.

Fonterra milk quality specialist Terry Playle said permission had been granted for three more similar sheds to be built, with a stipulation one be built in Southland to test different weather conditions.

Fonterra and AgResearch have now put a case to NZFSA for the trial to be shortened; if accepted the Dairyard concept will be available to anyone. Only Dairyard has this approval.

Now a well accepted concept, Herd Homes are used to holding stock during bad weather to conserve feed and reduce pasture damage.

All effluent is contained for later spreading onto pasture, reducing run-off. Cows remain cooler during summer.



Dairyard designer Tony Pow (second left) with visitors at the launch.

The new slatted yard replaces the usual round or rectangular concrete yard. Dairyyard is rectangular, 10.5m wide x 27m long with a backing gate. It is covered and has side awnings.

The roof is vented and a shade cloth ceiling is used in hot weather. The roof and awnings prevent rain entering the holding bunkers under the floor panels.

The yard can be extended in 3.5m

modules and buyers can retrofit a Dairyyard to an existing Herd Home.

The Mata trial farm milks 340 cows through a 30-aside herringbone and has 240 cows supplying winter milk.

The cows are milked twice a day taking between 90 minutes and two hours depending on numbers.

The trial included daily milk testing, checks on increases in vermin and bird life and odour, and tests using agar plates to

detect any increase in airborne bacteria.

One side of the Mata yard has gate panels, removed for emptying the bunkers. These were emptied for the first time after eight months. Each took two hours to empty including removing and replacing the floor panels. The material is spread onto pasture.

“The material is not liquid and the smaller particles do not taint the grass, enabling pasture to be grazed

after only five days,” says Herd Homes principal Tom Pow.

Advantages to milkers include quieter cows not exposed to the elements and no daily yard cleaning using large volumes of water.

Says Pow, “With our costings we believe a Herd Homes Dairyyard system can be installed for the same or lower cost of a conventional yard and extensive effluent disposal system.”

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