



MODERN SOLUTIONS FOR MODERN PROBLEMS

● NEVILLE PORTEOUS
RODNEY, NEW ZEALAND

PROJECT SPECS

44 Bail Orbit Concrete Rotary | 350 Cows | Commissioned 2023

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS: ECR-S, Cow Restraints, SmartSPRAY, 150mm Rotek Multi-Service Gland

AUTHORISED DEALER: Moa Milking & Pumping + Northland Farm Services

Milking time and labour costs halved with rotary upgrade

Dairy Farmers Neville and Ainslie Porteous are based at Te Arai Farms, Rodney, NZ, where they currently milk 350 cows.

“We bought the farm about 13 years ago and we owned it in an equity partnership, but about 6 years ago Ainslie and I bought the other partner out, so we’ve been farming it ourselves for the last 6 years” says Neville.

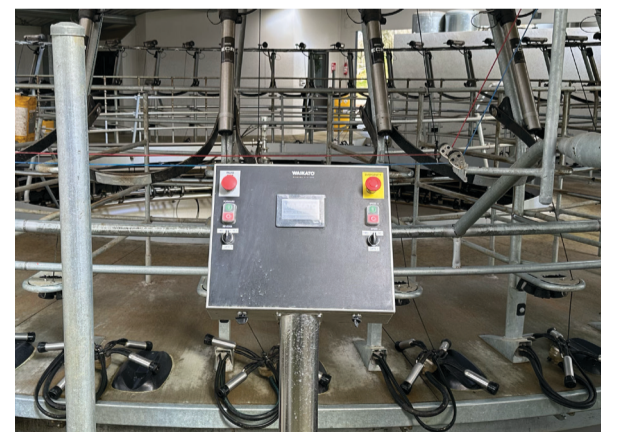
After battling away with a 30 aside herringbone in a 30-year-old shed they decided an upgrade was in order.

“We’ve got another share milking job up in Kaitaia and we milk 1100 cows up there, and there’s a

Waikato Milking Systems 54 Bail Rotary up there, it’s been there for 20 years, and we were just so impressed how one person could milk 1100 cows in 3 hours! And we thought that’s the sort of efficiencies we want down here.”

“We were running a 30 aside herringbone, but it was very old and we could only actually fit 25 cows up each side. It was very labour-intensive getting the cows up the wall side of that shed, it was just a battle.”

One of the key reasons Neville and Ainslie decided to upgrade to a Waikato Milking Systems Orbit Concrete rotary was the reduction in labour costs and increase in productivity.



“It was taking two people two and a half hours, and it wasn’t nice on the cows either because we were having to kind of push each row up, there was no flow.”

Since the upgrading to the 44 bail Orbit Rotary Neville has cut his milking time and staffing requirements in half.

"We've only been going two months and we're down to an hour and a quarter, for one person, and I think it's going to get a lot quicker than that!"

Aside from the efficiencies that the rotary provides, the fact that Waikato Milking Systems are designed and manufactured locally in New Zealand was also appealing.

"It's a New Zealand company, New Zealand technology, and with Covid and things like that, you'd heard about when you've got to get replacement parts, and that sort of thing, the thought of having to wait for something to come from overseas didn't really excite me too much."

When asked about whether there is one component of the new systems that really stood out for Neville, it was the all-new Multi-Service Gland.

"That central gland not only has your milk and air, it also has the wash, so the platform can be rotating while you put the wash through, so as soon as the cups are on you're away, there's no hooking on your external pipe."

"And the other thing is it has an air compressor gland in the top of it, which powers the air purge as well as the SmartSPRAY In-bail Teat Sprayers which also act as leg spreaders on the platform."

"I think we were one of the first in the North to have one, at the time it was an upgrade and we went for it and I'm glad we did."

In terms of operator fatigue a modern rotary parlour can have large impact and Neville and his staff have indeed noticed a big difference.

"In the old shed, we'd come out of there like we'd run a marathon sometimes, now it's just so much more relaxing, and so much better for the cows."

The wash system has also been very well received and Neville is finding the rotary much easier to keep clean than the old herringbone.

"With this pit design, the good thing is that all the effluent is contained within that area, so the outer walls always stay clean."



Although it has been a very challenging year with huge rainfall, Neville is already seeing an improvement in udder health.

"Most winters I always use teat conditioner, whereas this year even though it's been really wet, I noticed the teats were still in pretty good condition, I actually don't need as much teat conditioner as I normally would during winter."

Neville's staff have also been thrilled with the upgrade and he believes it will now be easier to attract and maintain staff moving forward.

"Our old shed was unsustainable; staffing it was hard work."

"Quite often we might have two people here, but one is just observing really, standing back relaxed, not actually physically working, they're really impressed."

"Infrastructure is key to maintaining staff, if they're working in a good environment and are happy and the cows are happy, then you're more likely to retain them, you know, our old shed was unsustainable, with staff it was hard work."

When asked about how well his cows adjusted to the Orbit rotary Neville says "We don't have a top gate

here, and I thought maybe we should have put one in, but from the 6-8 week mark, you barely need the backing gate, they just flow on."

When asked about dealing with the local rep Ray Stowe, Neville says, "Ray was really good. Communication was good, and if there was a problem they got it sorted out pretty quick. So overall very happy."

Moa Milking & Pumping carried out the initial installation work which was then completed by Northland Farm Services.

"They did a great job with the initial install, they actually came and camped out in one of the rooms and knocked it out pretty quick."

In terms of whether they might add further automation in future Waikato Milking Systems' local rep Ray Stowe suggests Te Arai Farms would benefit from the addition of Milk Meters as well as SmartDTECT Udder Health Detection to assist with the early detection of mastitis.

Neville says "The thing with Waikato Milking Systems is everything is bolt-on, if you want to put something in later you can, it's not a big deal, so we just thought we'll just go for the initial basics, and if we need it later on we can add it in."