

Enjoying the benefits of progressive growth

Richard Loader

In their fourth season working as contract milkers for Dairy Holdings Ltd, Shaun and Andrea Wise have enjoyed the benefits of progressive growth along with security within the industry they are both passionate about.

Dairy Holdings has extensive dairy farm operations in the South Island, and Shaun and Andrea have been contract milking 590 cows on the company's 138 hectare Tata Dairy property just out of Temuka since 2017.

Shaun and Andrea's contract with Dairy Holdings necessitated an investment in plant and machinery including a tractor, fuel tanks and mowers. Initially obtaining a bank loan to purchase the farm equipment, the debt has since been fully repaid.

The couple also brought with them 21 of their own cows leasing them to Dairy Holdings as part of the milking herd.

Over the last four seasons Shaun and Andrea have progressively increased their herd, which now stands at 476 milking cows along with young stock, leased back to Dairy Holdings.

Next season, Shaun and Andrea will own 100% of the herd and transition to a 50/50 sharemilking agreement with Dairy Holdings.

Having worked for a number of farm owners both in the North and South Islands since the beginning of the farming career in 2011, the job security provided by Dairy Holdings has been welcomed by Shaun and Andrea.

"With the support of Dairy Holdings, Andrea and I can grow at whatever speed we feel comfortable with," says Shaun. "We've been able to grow our business through progressively increasing our herd ownership and also our equity in plant and machinery. You wouldn't get that kind of growth in any other industry."

Softly spoken and originally 'a townie' from South Africa, Shaun says working in the outdoors had been a passion from a very early age.

Initially focused on becoming a vet, when that didn't work out Shaun turned to accountancy in the hope that it would enable him to buy land.

Finding his way to New Zealand in 2008, Shaun continued to work in accountancy for three years till meeting Andrea who hailed from a Northland dairy farming background.

But it wasn't till visiting a friend's dairy farm in 2010 that Shaun realized farming had always been his dream and he had to do something with his life – and that certainly happened the following year.



• to page 24 Shaun and Andrea with one of the two herds at Tata, near Temuka.

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Shaun shares some pasture knowledge with sons Daniel, Benjamin and Oliver.

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Seeing growth ‘inspirational’

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Married in 2011, Shaun took his first farm assistants job on a large Waikato property, also throwing himself into study undertaking ITO courses and any training offered by NZ Dairy.

For the next six seasons a succession of farming positions progressed Shaun’s knowledge and capability within the industry and ultimately drew the couple to where they are now.

Absolutely passionate about dairy farming, Shaun says when confronted with the good and the bad it is always mindset – things will always come right.

“Whatever it is – be it animals or nature, it’s about being involved with that every day and seeing growth – that’s inspirational for me. The cow has always been the most diverse animal and most efficient producer. Our pasture goals align very well with Dairy Holdings. Pasture is the one thing that can significantly influence production at the least

cost and by utilizing that efficiently we can increase production efficiently. Cows have traditionally eaten grass and they do best on grass. Our cows are predominantly grass fed, wintering on fodder beet and kale.”

Looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead, Shaun says he is appreciative of the on-going support provided by Dairy Holdings.

“That farm support has been in every sense – technical, regulatory, mental – both on a personal and business level. We get a lot of feedback on ourselves from Dairy Holdings, encouraging growth and we do the same with our staff.”

Does he have any regrets about his time in accountancy?

“I certainly wouldn’t go back to it by choice. But I have no regrets for having done it either, as it has been greatly beneficial for our business – being able to understand the accounts and taxes and having the eye for detail.”



PHOTOS: Replacement calves at Tata dairy unit. The Wise boys: Oliver, Benjamin and Daniel.



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