



VETERINARY EDUCATION TRANSFER SERVICES LTD

Working with Dairy Cows Courses
Staff Training, Resources, Seminars, Investigations.
With Neil Chesterton BVSc.

www.lowstressdairy.nz www.lamecow.co.nz



Rotary Milking Platform

Farm Policy – “Milking is an exercise in contentment”*

On our farm

Every milking will be calm with a consistent routine for people and the cows.

Operating Procedure

1. **Gathering cows for milking** – call cows “come on girls”
 - Allow cows to drift to the collecting yard
 - Keep 5 metres behind the last cow, don't stand in the blind spot.
2. **Milking yard** – Ensure there is enough space for the size of the herd before closing the entry gate (1.3 sq. m /Jersey (400kg), 1.5 sq. m/Friesian (550kg), 1.8- 2 sq. m/Holstein Friesian (650 – 750kg)).
3. **Start milking** as the first cows arrive if possible.
4. **Backing gate** –
 - Don't move the gate for at least 20 minutes or until at least three rotations have been milked to ensure enough space in the yard for the herd to rearrange into a milking order.
 - Move the gate little (maximum of one metre) and often **to take up the space in the yard** and to keep cows flowing into the bail entry area.
 - Backing gate must never be used to push cows.
 - Gate speed maximum of 12m/min in round yards, 6m/min in rectangular yards.
 - The ideal gate control is a button and a timer so that the gate moves forward a maximum of 1m per activation or ½ m in rectangular yards.
5. **Top gate** -
 - Maximum speed the same as the backing gate.
 - All staff must operate the gate with exactly the same method because cows are animals of routine. One example is the “5-cupping method”, where five cows are cupped between each action of the gate (after lifting the chains, moving the gate back, dropping the chains, moving the gate forward) .
 - **The top gate must never be used to push cows (even if not powered).**
6. **.Stay at cups-on** –
 - Call the cows on to the platform using a gentle tone (eg. “Come on girls”).
 - If a cow hesitates, step away further from bridge and call (come on girls) to cows in the yard.
 - Don't stop the platform.

- Avoid eyeballing cows.
- Milkers should only enter the yard away from the entry bridge area and only when absolutely necessary (for example the last group of cows).

7. **Udder preparation** –

If the cows teats are:

- a) Clean and dry - go ahead and cup
- b) Dry but dirty - wipe first then cup
- c) Wet and dirty - wash and dry then cup

8. **The Platform**

- Set the platform speed to suit your cupping speed.
- **Don't** back the platform up for cows, keep the platform moving.
- **Do** stop the platform if there is a risk of a cow or human getting hurt or when training cows to exit the platform.
- **Don't** allow cows any 'free riding'. All cows should exit after the clusters are taken off.
- Consider a compressed air jet activated by "cups on" person.

9. **In-bail feeders** – check that the feed is flowing correctly throughout milking.

10. **Milking behavior** –

- Keep milking calm and relaxed.
- **No shouting, no loud whistling.**

11. **Hosing down during milking.** Keep the bridge and platform clean during milking.

12. **The milking plant** –

- Listen and watch the plant throughout milking to make sure it is working properly.
- Keep the radio volume low. It is best to have no radio if there is disagreement between milkers on which station to listen to.