

Case Study: Jason and Tracey Huggett, Cambridge, New Zealand

Jason and Tracey Huggett are equity partners on a 117-hectare family dairy farm near Cambridge in New Zealand, currently milking 350 cows.

The farm purchased their first set of RDS WL100 loader scales in August 2005 and found the system invaluable in allocating correct amounts of supplements to the cows and for correctly loading fertiliser spread on the farm.

With the upgrading of farm tractors recently, there was a short period where scales were not being used. At that time, Jason was estimating the amount of Palm Kernel being fed, "On checking after fitting the new RDS WL a10 loader scale, we found that I was loading an additional \$160 worth of PKE per day – I calculated that in 34 days the new scales would be paid for," says Jason.

"I realised we were just guessing and didn't realise how far out we were," says Jason. Using the maize silage as a further example, Jason calculated that before the RDS scales were fitted, he guessed 100kg dry matter of maize per bucket going into the wagon. At 17 buckets a day, he thought he was spending \$544 per day on maize. The actual weight was around 150kg dry matter per bucket, costing \$816 per day – a \$272 difference, "At this rate the RDS scales were paid for in 20 days," says Jason.

"I now record every bucket load of supplements fed, saving load information with the RDS WL a10 scales is easy," says Jason.

This load information is available at no extra cost and is easily downloaded into Jason's computer, "We have a consultant and having this information backs up our decision making processes and makes analysing performance interesting – adding to the financial advantages we are getting on a daily basis. When we put our milk yields and our data from loads fed together, we can see the difference of when we input more or reduce supplementary feeding levels," says Jason.

Pat Dougherty and the team from RDS Systems have been fitting RDS loader scales for over ten years now and know from client feedback that Jason's experience is commonplace. Dougherty personally dairy farmed for 25 years and experienced the same issues around estimating feed weights.

"I wouldn't have minded a dollar for every time our team has heard 'Should have fitted them years ago', 'Use them every day', 'Best thing we ever did'," says Dougherty, reinforcing the cost saving benefits of having loader scales fitted

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