

# Margins pay off

Jeff and Janice Williams have proven that intensive dairy farming with massive bought in inputs are not incompatible with profits or sustainability on their all-year-round calving and milking, 120ha Kairanga, Manawatu, property.

The finalists in the Dairy Business of the Year competition previously supplied Kapiti Fine Foods (*Dairy Exporter*, October 2006)

They produce an average of 620 kilograms of milksolids (MS)/cow from their 413 Friesian cows. With up to 705 days in a lactation the cows can produce up to 900kg MS/lactation. Giving them a competition average of 515kg MS/cow and 2084 kg MS/ha.

This is well above the Manawatu/Wairarapa top 10 percent production figures of 392kg MS/cow and 1248 kg MS/ha. Their cost/cow was \$516.

However, their operating profit/ha at \$2989 was over six times that of the region's average farm and

double the top 10 percent figure of \$1492/ha.

"Unlike most farms we operate on margin over feed costs because supplements are such a big part of the diet," Jeff said.

## Cheap feed

"If we can source feed cheap enough all goes into milk production. Traditionalists are all hung up on kg of dry matter (DM) but it's actually megajoules of metabolisable energy (MJME) that's important. The more ME you can feed the better the production."

He is planting new pasture with the 9ha already regressed boosting production by a litre/day/cow.

By contract, production is limited to no more than 9000 litres a day. Anything above is not paid for.

Converted to dairying in 1973, the second-generation family farm has outgrown two dairies including their current 40-bail rotary unit built in 1984.



Jeff and Janice Williams.

Eight years ago Jeff launched into his current all-year calving and milking regime, bought a mixer-wagon, moved into Total Mixed Rations (TMR), and built the feedpad, doubling milk production.

He has run up to five cows/ha (251,000kg MS) but has now settled on four cows/ha.

The Williams' "zero-waste" feeding regime is based around close monitoring of the soil, regular

blood tests on the cows at calving and liver biopsies on cull cows, and monitoring cow dung.

"We feed a balanced diet to the cows based on our vet's recommendations with daily mineral balancing," Jeff said.

They prefer low-protein feeds in the spring to reduce the amount of nitrogen going into the urine stream, as well as keeping the cows out of the paddock to minimise urine leaching. **D**