



Operating Procedures: Herringbone Milking Platforms

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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 three rows 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 bails.
 - 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. **Stay in the pit** -
 - All milkers work from front of pit.
 - Call the cows into the bail.
 - Milkers should only enter the yard when really necessary, for example for the last row or two.
 - Use "low-stress handling" techniques if entering the yard (flight distance and balance points).
6. **Filling the bails** –
 - Encourage the cows to move to the front bails **by walking against the flow**, talking to the cows.
 - Don't tap pipework, poke cows, whistle or shout to push cows up the bails.

7. Cluster changing

- Always start cupping from the exit end of the pit
- Start cupping as soon as the first 4 cows are rowed up. This gives more time for the rest of the cows to row themselves up. ***Aim – once the first cow is position she should be cupped within 30 seconds.***
- **One milker** milks in batches of 4-5, teat spray as you go.
- **Two milkers**:- “leap frog” past each other, milking in batches of 4-5, teat spray as you go.

8. **Feeding** – ensure bail feeders are pulled as soon as cows are in position to give them time to eat. The ideal is to have bail feeders that drop feed to five - ten bails at a time to encourage the cows to come to the front.

9. **Milking behaviour** – keep milking calm and relaxed – **no whistling, no shouting, no poking or hitting cows or pipework.**

10. **Teat spraying** – cows teats are sprayed after every milking. Spray to cover all surfaces of all the teats.

11. **Opening the head gate** –

- The gate should be opened as soon as possible to give the cows time to exit and the next row to enter.
- Aim to open the gate once 50-75% of clusters have been changed.
- **Be brave, live dangerously!**

12. **Hosing down during milking.** Keep the bail area clean during milking. Hose down on the side where the cups are on, not in front of the cows as they enter.

13. **The milking plant** –

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