

Balancing productivity and environmental responsibility

How Rob and Cherrie Chubb are lifting farm performance while reducing nitrogen losses

Even with an already efficient system in place, Rob and Cherrie Chubb have continued to reduce nitrogen loss across their Golden Bay farm while simultaneously increasing milk production. Over the past 24 years, they have developed a simple pasture-based system built on steady, practical improvement by breeding efficient cows and maximising pasture use through careful grazing management.



Farm snapshot

Location:

Golden Bay,
South Island

Total dairy platform:

52.9 hectares
(irrigated)

Herd size:

142 crossbreed cows

FAMA member since:

2021

Support block

34 hectares
(young stock grazing, wintering and supplementary feed production)



Key results

Since the monitored base year of 2017, the Chubb's have achieved:

8%

Reduction in whole-farm nitrogen losses
66 kg N/ha → 61 kg N/ha

5%

Increase in milk production
65,396 kg MS → 68,827 kg MS

Significant reductions in nitrogen surplus indicators

Overseer nitrogen surplus: 164 → 138 kg N/ha
DairyNZ nitrogen surplus: 61 → 46 kg N/ha (25% reduction)

These improvements have been achieved while maintaining the same irrigated dairy platform.

On-farm changes

Several practical management changes have contributed to these results:

- ▶ Nitrogen fertiliser reduced from 107 → 89 kg N/ha
- ▶ Shift from granular to more targeted liquid nitrogen applications
- ▶ Winter feeding based on pasture, hay, and baled silage
- ▶ Improved nutrient understanding through effluent testing
- ▶ Expansion of effluent application area to improve nutrient distribution



Pasture and herd system

The Chubb's' performance is underpinned by a closely aligned pasture and breeding system:

- ▶ Strong focus on pasture quality and post-grazing residuals
- ▶ Use of pre-mowing, topping and timely harvesting of surpluses
- ▶ High pasture utilisation with low reliance on imported feed
- ▶ Structured breeding programme using selected CRV bulls with an emphasis on fertility, capacity, temperament and production



“We have always tried to maintain a simple system and do it well. Being part of FAMA provides us with new insights and continues to help us identify refinements to help us keep driving efficiencies.” – Cherrie Chubb, Chubb Farm

Learn more

To read more about Rob and Cherrie's story, visit: fama.org.nz