

‘Nothing is left to chance’

If you were to ask most people what the two key ingredients for success on a dairy farm would be, they'd more than likely say cows and grass. For award-winning farm manager, Paul Clement, his two success factors are people and water.

“You could have the best cows, land and technology but that doesn't count for much without a top team.”

Clement manages Delaborin Dairies, part of Theland Purata Farm Group and Canterbury winner of the 2017 Waterforce Integrated Management Award. According to the award judges, ‘the farm is immaculate and nothing is left to chance with fool-proof systems in place. There is recognition that water is a valuable resource and the farm is fortunate to be able to use it; monitoring and measuring systems ensure the best use of this resource’.

Centre pivots cover 343 hectares of the 370 hectares property, and in the larger dryland corners there are solid set sprinklers covering 13 hectares. The irrigators are linked to cloud-based technology which enables remote operation via a smartphone.

“There are four Aquaflex soil moisture monitors installed on the farm and I also

regularly manually check the moisture of the soils. This information, combined with extensive weather measuring – rainfall and evapotranspiration and forecasting – allows for optimum irrigation scheduling” says Paul.

As well as taking care of the water resources, Paul also looks after his people. Health and safety is an intrinsic part of his farm's culture, with Award judges commenting: ‘Paul has not only embraced the systems in place at Purata, he lives and breathes them, leading by example. His focus on people is one of the standout features of his approach to farming’.

Paul Donaldson, Joint Director of WaterForce, says Delaborin's ten pivots are only the start of the journey towards effective water management. “Monitoring data, to enable correct decision making, is the real key, and something that Paul Clement and his team at Daleborin do very well. Data gathered from the soil moisture monitors and weather stations, and then the ability to easily change irrigation programs via SCADA Farm telemetry, has enabled the team to optimise their water use and minimise wastage.

“For us at Waterforce, it's great to work with like-minded clients. We strive for a



Paul Clements.

similar culture, where our team is valued and they feel like they're a part of the client's success story.”

JUDGES' COMMENTS

- Recognition that water is a valuable resource and should be used responsibly
- Irrigation decisions made on soil moisture monitoring in conjunction with weather data
- Automated irrigation systems
- Smartphone technology allows irrigators to be operated and monitored from anywhere in the world.
- Openness to use the awards programme as a way of gaining valuable feedback on his farm operation and using that information to make improvements.

