

# The TechKISS Project Report

Nov-2019

## Cow Management Technologies

on NSW dairy farms in 2018



TechKISS is a NSW Dairy Industry Fund project helping dairy farmers 'get what they want' from individual cow management technologies.

More effective use of auto-drafting, computerised bail feeding, in-line milk meters and activity meters has the potential to significantly increase herd productivity.

### The project approach



The project has worked with farmers and service providers in New South Wales to create new resources (short videos and Topic Sheets) that share key elements for successful technology use on farm.

### What technology is in Australia?

The first step was to compile a list of the cow management technologies that are commercially available in Australia: the TechMatrix.

The TechMatrix is an independent resource that summarises the key features of about 80 products from 20 manufacturers.

The contents of the TechMatrix will change as new products are released or the functionality of existing products expands.

The spreadsheet and a video on how to use the TechMatrix are available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries website. It is a good starting point for discussions about tech on farm.

### How many farms have the technologies?

60% of farms use one or more of the technologies

Single 22%	Two 18%	Three 13%	All 4 7%
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The survey of NSW dairy farms found that:

- 40% of farms don't have these technologies (all but one of these had less than 300 cows).
- Of the 60% of farms with tech: 22% had a single technology, 31% used two or three, and 7% had all of four.

In 2018, 38% of farms had auto-drafting, 35% had computerised bail feeding systems, 26% had in-line milk metering and 26% had activity meters.

While the majority of farms with auto-drafting or in-line milk metering had installed them more than five years ago, 61% of the farms with activity meters had put them on in the last two years.

NLIS Electronic Identification worked the auto-drafting system on 76% of farms, the bail feeding on 71% of farms, and the in-line milk meters on 52% of farms.

Herd Management Software developed in Australia is used on half the farms in NSW (Easy Dairy on 38%, Jantec on 12%). The next most commonly used package is Alpro/Delpro (on 10% of farms). 21% of farms do not use computerised records for herd management (all had less than 300 cows).

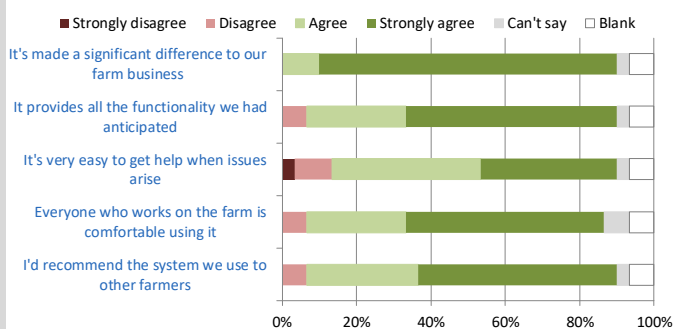
Satisfaction with the cow management technologies is high and most farmers said they had made 'a significant difference to the farm business'.

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## How well is it playing out on farm?

39 farm interviews

### Auto-drafting



### Computerised bail feeding



### In-line milk meters

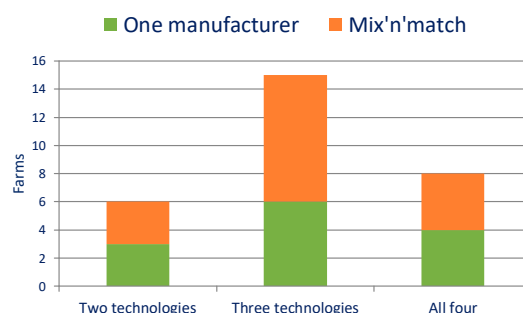


### Activity meters



Many of the 'tips and traps' of technology in the TechKISS resources came from the interviews with 39 farmers and 35 service providers. More than half of the 29 farms with multiple technologies were using a mix and match of brands.

### 29 farms with multiple technologies



## Extent of tech integration on farm

The interviews confirmed that integration of cow management technologies is not a given when using a 'mix and match' of brands.

When integration is a priority, the options are to:

- Buy technologies that work together,
- Negotiate a case-by-case solution with the tech supplier (also best done at purchase), or
- Use the technologies independently (which may require entering data such as calving dates into 2 separate systems).

Farmers largely rely on other farmers and dealerships for advice about purchasing and using equipment (there are no independent services for this).

## How data generated by tech is used

Farmers primarily use the cow management technologies to (fully or partly) automate tasks.

While a major driver for investing is to reduce costs associated with labour, the benefits of using tech were more centred around 'making things easier', 'reducing stress' and 'being able to leave the farm'.

Few farms were using data from the technologies for herd-level decision-making, although this is likely to be where a lot of farm productivity improvements could potentially be made.

Visit [NSW Department of Primary Industries](#) for videos and Topic Sheets on the TechKISS technologies shown above, and the TechMatrix. Our thanks to the 20 technology suppliers, 141 NSW dairy farmers and 35 advisers who contributed to this project.



TechKISS is a New South Wales Dairy Industry Fund project delivered by the Harris Park Group between 2018 and 2019. Project information is generic and is offered on an 'as is' basis with no guarantees of completeness or accuracy. Please seek advice before acting.