

CAMERON FARM

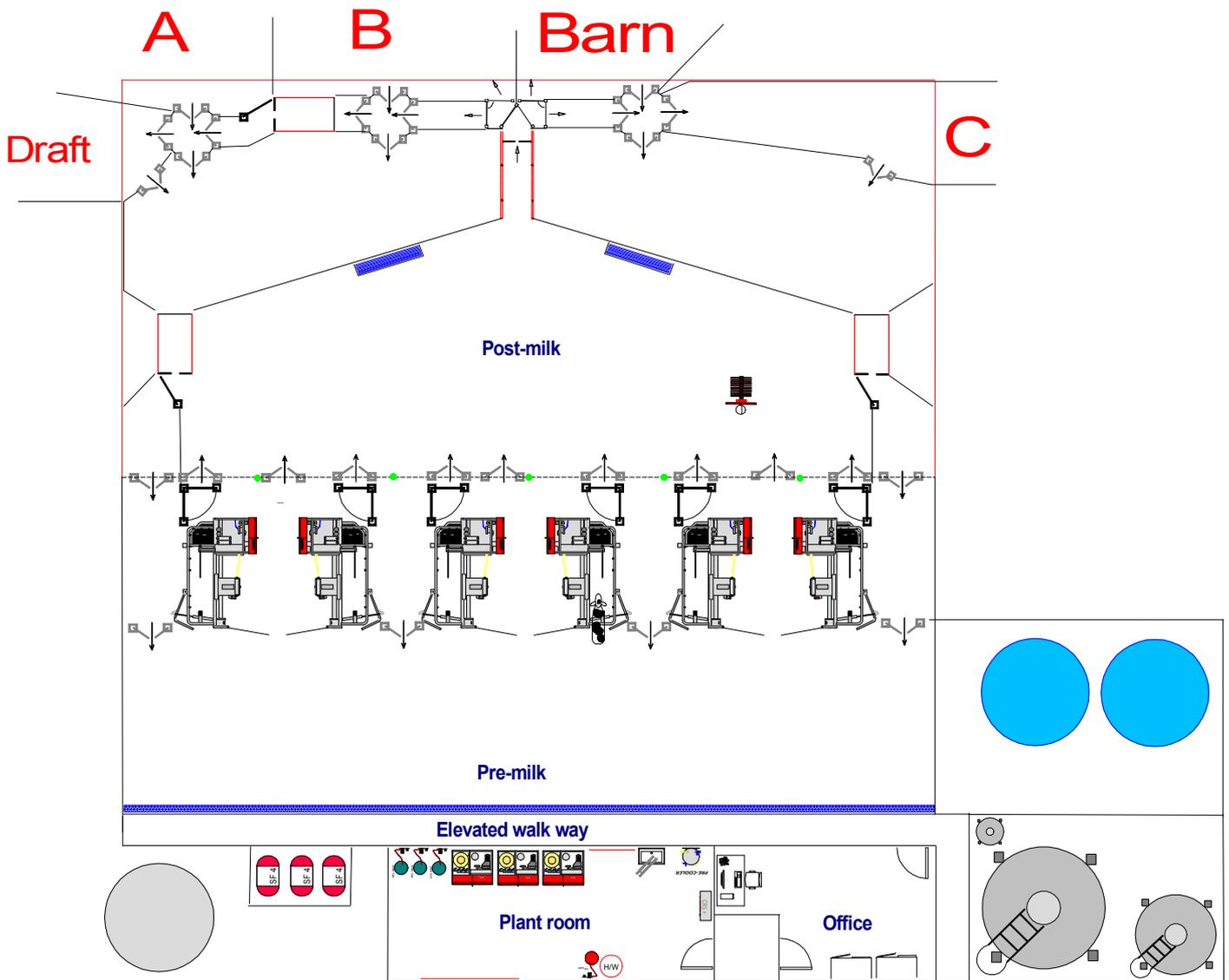
Lely Center™ Hamilton



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innovators in agriculture



Cameron farm: **quick** look

Number of cows: 480 Friesian & Cross-breed cows

Farm size: 230 hectares

Number of Lely Astronaut A4s: 6

Number of Lely Luna cow brushes: 1

Cameron farm **overview**

Built around the cow

The Lely Astronaut robotic milking system is designed to suit the Cameron farm and to improve animal health and the well-being of their cows. For instance, cow's have the easiest entrance into the robot and is not forced into a certain position in the cow box. Teat treatment and attachment of the teat cups are done very hygienically to improve udder health. Extensive data is also gathered, which will help the farmer to prevent diseases and improve the animal health status of the whole herd.

Advanced T4C management system

The T4C management system has been helpful to Ben Cameron and Farm Manager Darren Smith in determining the health and well-being of his herd. From a quick glimpse of the screen, Ben and Darren can check many factors including; udder health, rumination, milk quality, milk production, heat detection, milking visits and time between milkings, feed intake and much more!

Feed driven ABC grazing system

The grazing systems let the cows move from block to block (A, B, C, D) at their leisure. The system is feed driven, as cows are rewarded with supplements in the robot and fresh pasture post milking. Cows are given a new pasture block every 8 hours; one being close to midnight to encourage night utilisation of the robots. Plus access to the herd home once a day. It's a 24/7 system.



A chat with Ben Cameron

100 years of dairy farming sees the need to upgrade technology and plan for future generations

The Cameron family have been farming on this now 230 hectare property just outside of Morrinsville for over 100 years and for Ben Cameron and wife Justine the hope for that to continue into the future meant making their operation work as efficiently as possible.

Ben's journey from share milking, then owning this highly productive dairy farm started back in 1989 and since then this farm has experienced big changes. Twelve months ago Ben and Justine made the decision to upgrade their milking platform to a Lely Astronaut A4 robotic milking system and they are now experiencing a whole new realm of dairy farming.

Currently milking 480 Friesian and Crossbred cows through 6 Lely Astronaut A4 robots, Ben states that the driving factor behind changing to robotics was he needed to plan for the future – "making what we've got work well... Long term, it was the best plan". Ben's Herringbone milking system was in need of an upgrade and with the recent purchase of more land and cows the decision was made to convert to robots. "It was important to set the farm up for the future, in the hope that one day the kids will take over the farm. I want to give them the same opportunity as I was given to run the farm" states Ben. Ben, Justine and farm Manager Darren easily reap the benefits of milking 365 days a year, without having to do any physical milking's, or worrying about staffing issues.

Twelve months on from the installation of their Astronaut A4 robots Ben explains that one of the most attractive aspects of converting to robots was that Farm Manager Darren would be able to look after 480 cows, with the help of just one assistant. "Working hours and conditions are very favourable as one person can run the farm. A working week is five days, with one weekend a month" says Ben.

Thanks to the Lely T4C herd management system Ben and Darren are alerted when a cow may have a health issue, such as lameness. This means Ben and Darren can now treat cows

as individuals, instead of a whole herd and in turn means less money on vet bills and drugs to treat health issues. The Lely T4C management system also shows them key producers within the herd, with Ben stating "good cows have done really well and increased production and winter cows introduced didn't drop much at all. Now we've calved [for the second time since introducing robots] and cows are producing really well".

Lely T4C herd management system collects and records all data provided by the Lely Astronaut robots through its many sensors including; cow weight, rumination minutes, cow activity, fat/protein indications, milk production, feed intake, milking speed and number of visits to the robot to name a few. It analyses and presents only clear and useful information, making for more control and more freedom when it comes to managing your herd.

Utilising a pasture management system, the Lely ABCD grazing system, cows alternate between three races and a herd home within a 24 hour period, meaning less pressure on pasture and more recovery time for paddocks between grazing's. With the herd home feeding maize silage, grass silage, PKE, minerals after the cows visit the robot.

Ben chose Lely because he trusted the longevity of the Lely brand, plus the presence and experience of Lely Center™ Hamilton, compared to that of competitors. Ben states that "the ability to back us up [when required] has always been the case" and makes operating a robotic milking system an easy process on the Cameron family farm.

Twelve months into milking his cows with the Lely Astronaut A4 robotic milking system Ben is confident with what the Astronaut can do and that Lely staff members are available to support and answer questions when required, 24/7.

For more information on how the Lely Astronaut robotic milking system could improve the way you milk your cows, call Lely New Zealand today – 0800 LELY NZ.

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