

## The Canterbury Experience

Geoff Stevenson, Te Pirita

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### History

- Canterbury born and bred.
- Julie Fourth generation Dairy Farmer
- 29 years in Industry
- Farmed below Doyleston on the edge of Lake Ellesmere
- Sold Land to Fish and Game to create the Boggy Creek Reserve.
- Wanted to expand enterprise as had a family and they only way to compete with inflation (rising operational costs) was to grow business.
- Lake edge == Environmental issues
- Sold 360 acres in 4 blocks milking through two Dairy sheds milking 400 cows and brought 685 acres in Te Pirita milking 700 cows and running replacements

### Business now

- Property on purchase provided living for a husband and wife, no staff
- Now supports 3 couples and children and three single staff.
- One shed for 700 cows.
- Farm was set up to handle large numbers.
- Housing for staff new and user friendly.
- All systems designed for handling large quantities from day one as opposed to continually being built upon especially effluent. Ability to spread on 80 hectares well outside areas needed.
- Use 170 units of N, low use in autumn because winter off.
- Cows wintered at a grazing block at Hororata.
- Young stock stay at home to keep pasture in growing state.
- Because large business have to use technology and latest science.
- Nutrient Budgeting
- Water trial with equipment linked via cell phone to E-Can looked at including other two wells but \$10,000 and with Central Plains Water on go, pay back period too short to be viable.

### Future

- Continue investing in the business.
- Shares every extra kg = \$6.56
- Irrigation . Central Plains Water – River water v Groundwater
- Plant more shelter.
- Continue to only use fertilizers that are needed.

### **Community Perceptions**

- Intensification because no more cheap land left so I have to increase productivity to live.
- Compare with vegetables that the consumer always wants cheaper products.
- Computers in the same basket.
- News always has to be negative to be printed.
- Alarmist headlines with little science behind.
- i.e. nitrates. Septic tanks some of worst offenders (Keith Cameron)
- The Dairy Industry has some bad ones but majority still ok.
- Compare the fact that all industry gets blamed but this does not happen in cities, compare latest crime stories from Monday's paper for weekend and say that we don't label all urban dwellers as murders, rapists and drunks.