



*"Getting cows in calf is a really big issue, so I say, just put the Heatime System in, because it's going to pay for itself in 2-3 years, by taking out all the guessing factors."*

Brendan Ashby, Co-Owner, Caveview Farm

## Caveview Farm Reduces Calving Interval, Doubles Conception Rate and Identifies Mastitis Earlier with Allflex Heatime® Pro System

### BACKGROUND

Caveview Farm, owned by Brendan and Amanda Ashby, with Brendan's parents, Trevor and Anne, was established in Allendale East, in South Australia, in the mid-1900s by Brendan's grandparents. Today, the farm milks 350 cows and carries 250 heifers on 794 acres of land.

### CHALLENGES

As a rotational grazing farm, effectively picking up heats and health issues, without too many false positives, is a constant challenge at Caveview.

According to Brendan, one of his biggest issues has been getting cows back into calf as quickly as possible after calving. Previously, using visual observation and heat detection patches, it was taking 150-200 days to do this. His goal was to get the majority into calf in less than 100 days.

Brendan also wanted to improve health management on the farm. He was certain that rumination monitoring would be an effective tool for catching mastitis and other issues earlier.

Since his herd was not showing the best results from a fertility point of view, he also wanted to be able to make better culling decisions. He says: "I found we were culling a lot of good cows because they weren't getting into calf, and I wanted to minimise that."

### AT A GLANCE

Company: Caveview Farm  
Location: Allendale East, South Australia  
Herd size: 350 milking cows and 250 heifers

#### Challenges

- Significantly reduce average calving interval
- Expand herd through natural growth
- Identify optimal time for insemination
- Make better informed decisions about culling

#### System

- Allflex Heatime® Pro System using HR LD tags for rumination, heat detection and cow identification

#### Benefits

- More accurate heat identification, including ability to pinpoint the optimal time for AI
- Number of semen straws per cow reduced from 3-4 to 1.5-2, in nine months
- Able to spot health issues like ketosis and mastitis much earlier due to rumination monitoring
- Increased milk production
- \$3,000 savings per year on heat detection patches alone

## SYSTEM

Brendan and his father decided to implement the Allflex Heatime HR LD Pro System after consulting with their local Semex representative. The Allflex system's unique rumination monitoring capabilities were a major factor in the decision, as Brendan says: "We believe rumination has a lot to do with heat; it's another tool to try and help."

Just two weeks after installing the Allflex system, Caveview got rid of its visual heat detection aids, and began relying entirely on Heatime technology. Now, nine months later, all 350 of his milking cows are wearing HR LD tags. There is also a tag on one maiden heifer – a trial to see if the system helps in getting her to first calving earlier.

## BENEFITS

Overall, Brendan and his family now enjoy true peace-of-mind, as they no longer have to question what's going on with their cows. As Brendan says: "You just see it in the reports."

Brendan has found that the Allflex Heatime System does an excellent job of picking up heats and health issues, with few false positives. Importantly, when there are false positives, such as when cows move around more than usual, the system accounts for the false readings and easily interprets them.

With the Allflex technology, Brendan has a better idea of each cow's readiness for AI, and is better able to define the mating time. "At around 21-30 days we are making sure they are cycling properly and have had a heat. Then when we get to 60 days, we know that everything is working properly, so that on the first heat we can get the cow into calf," he says.

"We've learned that 15-25 hours after peak heat you have about a 40% chance of getting into calf, and that increases to around 90% at around 12-13 hours. We're starting to find that sweet point for AI."

The Allflex Heatime HR LD Pro System has also proven effective in helping Brendan identify mastitis early. "With the rumination monitoring, we're catching mastitis when the somatic cell count is around 110-120 instead of around 300. This means the cow can get treatment earlier and milk production is not as affected."

Rumination monitoring is also helping Brendan spot feed issues. "About six weeks after the system was put in, we accidentally adjusted the grain too high within our system," he recalls. "The cows got a bit of acid anaemia. We saw it in about 100 cows, with 20-30 that were really bad. Without the rumination monitoring, we could have lost one because we wouldn't have been able to pick out the really badly affected cows."

Improved fresh cow health management is another major benefit of the Allflex Heatime System. "I saw through the rumination numbers that one cow had a spot of ketosis, so I drenched her and she just took off. Twelve weeks after calving she produced 73 litres in a day; and that's after starting out at about 25-30 litres. I'd never seen that before!"

Thanks to the Allflex Heatime System, Brendan is already enjoying some quantitative savings, including \$3,000 savings on heat detection patches each year. He is also starting to see the beginnings of the bigger savings and benefits that he expects, including significantly lower semen costs, more effective culling, and a more fertile and productive herd overall.



About Allflex Livestock Intelligence

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