

"To be profitable, we need to improve our numbers with the same cows, which is something Allflex Heatime Pro is helping us do. Days in milk are down and pregnancy rates are up, which is where we want to be."
Ronald Rabbers, Owner, Rhoelandt Farm

Rhoelandt Increases Milk Production and Solves Labor Challenges with Allflex Heatime® Pro

BACKGROUND

Rhoelandt, in the Castro municipality of Paraná state in Southern Brazil, was founded in 1953. In 1986, when Ronald Rabbers took the farm over from his father, it had 60 cows, 50 of which were for milking. The farm has since grown by 10% annually and now stands at 900 animals, including 380 dairy cows.

CHALLENGES

Although the farm enjoyed significant growth over the years, manpower had become a problem. According to Rabbers: "It was hard to find skilled employees to work with milk every day, especially those who can see and understand animal behavior and are proactive in reporting early."

To compensate, he needed a system that could serve as reliable "eyes" and "ears", with actionable insight that would guide them what to do. In the past he'd tried non-Allflex collars, but he felt he wasn't getting enough information.

AT A GLANCE

Company: Rhoelandt Farm
Location: Castro, Paraná, Brazil
Herd size: 900 animals, including 380 lactating cows

Challenges

- Reduce dependence on hard-to-find employees who are able to understand animal behavior and report proactively
- Increase pregnancy rate
- Identify sick cows early
- Monitor for animal distress

System

- Allflex Heatime® Pro System with HRLDn neck tags for real-time heat detection, rumination and health monitoring
- Allflex HealthyCow24® Solution

Benefits

- Data is used to accurately manage heat, health, and diet without dependence on a single worker
- Conception rate increased by ~12%
- 30-day pregnancy loss decreased by 13%
- Days in milk is down by 26%, from 230 to 170
- Open cows returned to breeding 30% quicker

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SYSTEM

In February 2018, Allflex Heatime Pro was installed at Rhoelandt. Rabbers chose it primarily for the activity and rumination information it provides. He also liked the intuitive use, which he noticed right way. “Not only is the system is easy to use,” he says, “but the information is easy to understand.”

BENEFITS

Rabbers now relies on Allflex Heatime Pro daily for insight regarding heat, health and feeding batch changes, which he uses to guide operational decisions, as well as for employee meetings.

Actions taken based on information provided by Allflex Heatime Pro have improved breeding decisions. Previously, the farm relied on visual observation, which was not very accurate. Now, only cows that show heat are inseminated, reducing wasted semen and time.

Rabbers is now inseminating heifers at 11 months. The conception rate has increased by approximately 12%. Thirty-day pregnancy loss has decreased by 13%. And open cows are returning to breeding 30% faster.

Allflex Heatime Pro has also significantly improved productivity. “In fact,” Rabbers says, “we have reduced days in milk by around 26%, dropping from 230 days to 170 days.”

While he mostly uses the system for heat identification, Allflex Heatime Pro also plays a significant role in assessing partum distress, and in the examination routine for postpartum animals.

Additionally, rumination monitoring gives Rabbers a better grasp on the effects of feed. “With consumption tracking by rumination rate and batch performance we can see if the diet is good, or if there are problems in things like the mixture or fiber size and make changes accordingly,” he says. “Like how I took monensin from the diet and started using functional oil instead.”

In terms of cow wellness, the insight the system provides helps Rabbers better handle heat stress peaks and identify optimal solutions like ventilation, sprinkling, or de-crowding. “And, instead of identifying illness by seeing a reduction in production, we can now often see it before, which means earlier intervention, for better results,” he says.

Although he’s chosen not to receive alerts to his phone or email, Rabbers does used Allflex HealthyCow24 to stay up to date on his farm data when he’s not onsite.

As for overall satisfaction with the system, Rabbers considers it a process of trust. “Reproduction results come fast, which helps you gain confidence,” he says. “Once you’re ready to trust, you’ll quickly see that Allflex Heatime Pro simply works!”



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About Allflex

www.allflex.global

Allflex, part of MSD Animal Health, is the world leader in the design, development, manufacturing and delivery of solutions for animal identification, monitoring and traceability. Our solutions empower farmers to act in a timely manner, to safeguard their animals’ health, while achieving optimal production outcomes for a healthy food supply.

Through its commitment to the Science of Healthier Animals®, MSD Animal Health offers veterinarians, farmers, pet owners and governments one of the widest ranges of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and health management solutions and services. MSD Animal Health is dedicated to preserving and improving the health, well-being and performance of animals and the people who care for them.

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