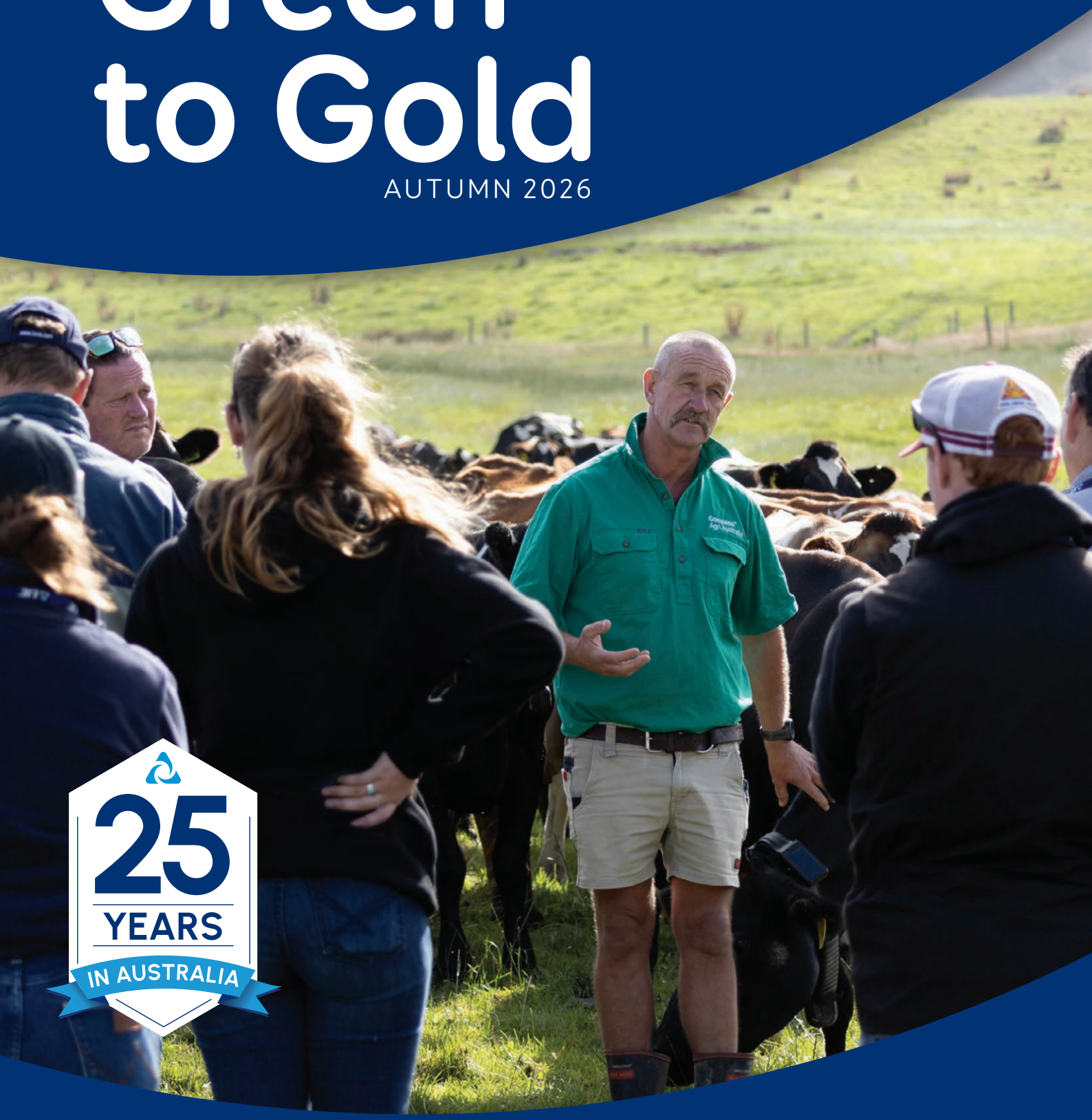
Green to Gold

AUTUMN 2026

LIC®
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT



25 YEARS IN AUSTRALIA

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Green to Gold

As we launch our 2026 genetics programme, we also acknowledge an important milestone - 25 years of LIC operating in Australia. While this marks our official presence, LIC genetics have been supplying Australian dairy herds for more than 50 years. This long-standing relationship underpins our ongoing focus on delivering reliable, pasture-based genetics that support productivity and performance on farm.

In February, we had the pleasure of taking a group of farmers around Tasmania to see LIC herds in action and explore some of the region's most innovative, high-performing grazing operations. The trip was packed with inspiration, fresh ideas, and plenty of laughs - discover the full story on pages 2-5.

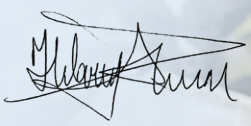
Staying in Tasmania, many of you will know Rowan Priest as the LIC District Manager, but in this edition we're shining a light on Rowan and his partner, Rob Gair, as farmers in their own right. Their journey across Australia is as honest as it is inspiring.

We're also excited to feature two rising young couples - 50/50 sharefarmers Luke and Hannah Aldridge, and Blair and Lisa Tucker - who generously share insights into their farming lives, breeding philosophies, and the lessons they've learned along the way.

You'll receive this magazine alongside our 2026 catalogue, where you'll notice just how often the Payne name appears. Brad and Claire Payne have created a legacy of genetic excellence on their Waikato farm in New Zealand, and we're thrilled to include an article on page 18 highlighting their story as breeders.

And as bull selection ramps up for the coming breeding season, we've profiled some of our newest recruits to help guide your decisions.

Enjoy the read - and all the best for the season ahead.



Hilary Lunn
Country Manager
Australia

LIC's Tasmania Farmer Tour: Real Farms, Real Systems, Real Results

LIC Australia recently hosted a Tasmania Farmer Tour, bringing together dairy farmers of all ages from across Australia to explore different farming systems, herd improvement strategies and business models. The tour offered valuable insights into how these approaches deliver profitable outcomes on commercial farms. While also showcasing Tasmania's stunning landscapes and fostering strong social connections among attendees.

The tour group takes a closer look at Gijsbers Agri's herd, Edith Creek - boots on the ground and cows all around

Tasmania is one of Australia's most diverse and productive dairy regions, home to around 180,000 dairy cows across 335 dairy farms[1], with an average herd size of 523. In 2024-25, the state produced 901 million litres of milk - 10.8 per cent of Australia's national milk production[2].

Dairy systems are largely pasture-based, supported by spring and autumn rainfall. Irrigation plays a key role in maintaining pasture growth during drier months, ensuring consistent, high-quality feed year-round. The Central Highlands contain major water storages including Lake St Clair and Great Lake with water carefully managed for hydroelectric generation, environmental needs and irrigation.

"It's good to get out of your own little community and bubble. This tour has been a real big eye-opener - seeing what actually goes on at other farms shows you that your way, or your neighbour's, isn't the only way it can be done."

Monique Ferrari - Western Victoria, Australia

Farmers access irrigation through water licences or irrigation schemes, often with associated costs and restrictions during low-flow periods.

Despite varying soil types, Tasmania's fertile land, reliable water supply, and well-managed pastures underpin highly efficient and sustainable dairy systems.

On day one, the group visited two of the seven Compass Agri farms in the Derwent Valley: Clearview (Gretna) and Pindari (Ouse). One property features an excellent rotary milking system, while the other showcases a high-quality herringbone setup. Both farms are located in what many would consider non-traditional dairying country, surrounded predominantly by beef operations. Compass Agri also has a third dairy conversion underway in the region.

Compass Agri uses 100% LIC genetics across their farms, milking high-performing crossbred herds with collar technology.

Ryan Ashby, operations manager, Compass Agri

Cows at the Clearview and Pindari farms average 480 kg and 470 kg, producing 467 kgMS and 430 kgMS per cow respectively - a great example of how smart genetic selection can optimise herd performance.

Next on the itinerary was Dornauf Dairies, owned by Nick and Bek Dornauf at Moltema in the Meander Valley. Farming near Deloraine for three generations, the Dornauf's Friesian herd is backed by decades of LIC breeding and built to perform.

With a Friesian herd of approximately 650 cows, production figures are impressive and sit at 603 kgMS per cow, but it was Nick's depth of knowledge and practical insight that stood out.

His understanding of the Tasmanian dairy industry - from seasonal feed planning and breeding decisions to succession planning - was well received by the group.

Day two saw the group visit Rosemount Ag's 'Gala Farm' based in Quamby Brook, owned through an equity partnership between the Greenacre and Bradley families.

Eight robotic milk stations operate 24 hours a day, with 540 Friesian cows voluntarily moving through the system.

During the tour, Ujjwal "Uuzi" Chapagain, the farm operations manager, hosted the group and explored a question many pasture-based farmers are asking: how does grazing management adapt when cows can choose when they are milked?

He demonstrated the farm's grazing planner, explaining how the system operates across four zones including two 'open' grazing areas - one area for the cows to move into from the shed and another area they return to - carefully managing cow traffic flow, pasture allocation and milking frequency. Producing 590 kgMS/cow, the farm demonstrates that in a high-tech robotic setup, it is ultimately pasture management that powers the entire voluntary system - with cow health, precise feed allocation, strong fertility, and efficient conversion of grass into milk solids all flowing from how well the pasture is managed.

Next stop was BWB Management's Clear Springs farm in Meander, where contract milkers Tim and Fiona Salter showcased what strong management can achieve on a corporate-owned farm.

Originally a dairy conversion, the Salters have been involved from the very beginning, helping set up the transition and staying on for the past ten years to build a highly successful operation.

Today they milk a large crossbred herd of 1400-1500 cows at 490 liveweight, achieving 510 kgMS/cow. Their predominantly pasture-based feeding regime - supplemented with around one tonne of grain and 700 kg of other supplementary feed per cow - attracted plenty of discussion. All stock are wintered on farm, relying on a combination of grass and silage.

The journey continued toward Smithton with a scenic detour that gave the group a taste of Tasmania beyond the farm gate. Along the way we visited the historic coastal town of Stanley and a memorable chairlift ride up 'The Nut', where everyone enjoyed sweeping panoramic views of the rugged coastline, Bass Strait and surrounding countryside.

Starting the fourth day of the tour, we visited Gijsbers Agri based in Edith Creek. Jeffrey Gijsbers and Monique Mulder shared their inspiring story of hard work, learning, and success, which really impressed the group.

Originally from Holland and with no prior farming experience, they quickly made their mark in the Tasmanian dairy industry progressing from farm employees to 50/50 sharemilkers and now owners of a 170 ha farm. Today they milk around 630 cows, producing approximately 550-580 kgMS/cow.

Monique's calf rearing program drew particular attention. At one stage, she balanced a full time role as a field officer with Fonterra while rearing up to 300 calves each year.

Dornauf Dairies herd, Meander Valley, Tasmania

"It's well worth joining the LIC Farmer tour. We'd seen Tasmania as tourists, but until you step onto the farms and see the different soils, rainfall, irrigation and challenges, you don't really understand what it's like to farm here."

Michael Lawry - Northern Victoria, Australia

Today, she continues to rear hundreds of calves annually using the LIC Fast Forward Team®, producing healthy, well-grown young stock that will play a big part in shaping the future performance of the herd.

Jeffrey summed up their journey simply: "Work hard - learn everything you can, take every opportunity and back yourself."

The group then visited Greenacres farm in Smithton, where Brian and Margaret Nichols, alongside their son Paul - who is the contract milker - showcased family farming at scale.

The family owns two farms, each operated by one of their sons, and together they supply about 11% of the milk processed at the Cadbury Tasmanian factory.

A great example of multi-generational agriculture in action, with the brothers managing their respective properties and their daughter's partner, Isaac, responsible for all calf rearing.

Producing 469 kgMS per cow from 500 kg liveweights, the farm focuses on a pasture-based system, supplemented with around 1.2 tonnes of grain - a demonstration of efficient, low input dairy production.

The tour then moved on to Togari Dairies farm at Togari, run by Robert Gair and Rowan Priest in a 50/50 sharemilking partnership supplying Dutch Mill. Located in the wettest part of the state, the farm is among the most affected by heavy rainfall, yet it sustains a thriving 500-cow crossbred herd bred from LIC KiwiCross® sires.

Despite the challenges, the herd delivers strong performance - averaging around 440 kgMS per cow annually, a testament to how well-matched genetics to the environment can drive profitability even under climatic pressure. Read more about their success on Page 12 of this issue.

At Montagu Dairies the group saw a strong 50/50 equity partnership between Chris & Gill Walsh and Anthony & Julie Lissington. With Chris as farm manager, Chris & Gill won 'Share Farmers of the Year' in 2010 and continue to consistently achieve 'Premium Quality Milk' awards, reflecting ongoing excellence in herd performance and milk standards.

Featuring a 990 cow herd averaging 463 kgMS per cow and run through a 60-bale rotary, the visit highlighted Chris and Gillian's progression from employees to award-winning sharefarmers and now equity partners - a pathway many younger farmers aspire to follow.

The final morning saw the group travel from Smithton to Yolla for one last farm visit at Macdonald Dairies, run by Alastair, Duncan and Shannon Macdonald. The tour enjoyed close-up views of two strong Jersey and crossbred milking herds (520 and 750 cows) and quality young stock sired by LIC's Fast Forward Team®, taking advantage of a selection of elite genomic sires designed to fast-track genetic gain on farm.

Highlights included another look at collar technology and a quick look at Australia's first rotary dairy shed - built in 1973 and still in operation today - blending together the farm's heritage with today's innovation.

As the tour concluded, participants reflected on a week marked by valuable learning, meaningful discussions on herd improvement, exposure to innovation, and camaraderie. A tour highlighting that, while innovation is important, well-managed, proven practices can reliably deliver results when tailored to local conditions. New connections were made and many very interesting moments were captured along the way.

We offer our sincere thanks to the farmers who generously opened their gates and shared their expertise, to the many individuals working behind the scenes to make this tour possible, and to all participants for their engagement and professionalism.

Contract Milkers Tim and Fiona Salter share insights into their farm system and goals with the visiting group

We also extend special appreciation to WestVic Dairy and the DemoDairy Foundation, whose support ensures this important experience continues to benefit both established farmers and the next generation of industry leaders.

A remarkable week and an enriching experience for all - until next time, Tasmania

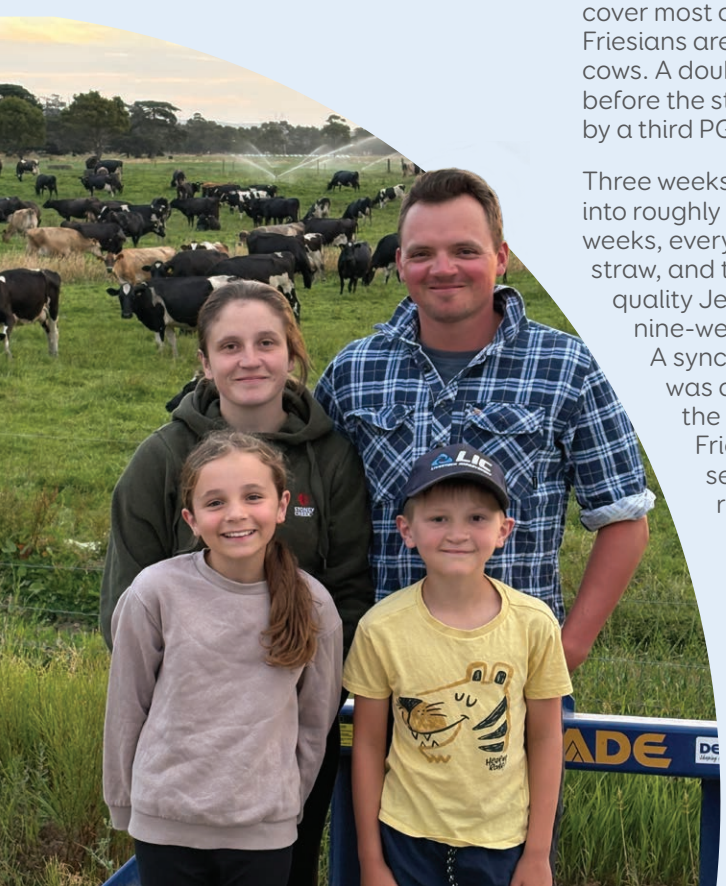
Reference:
[1] Dairy Australia, Annual Report, 2023-24
[2] Dairy Australia, Dairy Farm Monitor Project, Tasmania Annual Report 2024-25

Building Their Future:
Blair and Lisa Tucker's First Season in Circular Head

For Blair and Lisa Tucker, dairying isn't just a career - it's the foundation of their family life, their future goals, and the story they've been writing together since they were young. Now in their first season sharemilking in Tasmania's Circular Head region, the couple is proving that passion, persistence, and smart planning can open doors for young farmers in a competitive landscape.

Blair, 31, grew up on multiple dairy farms across the Waikato - New Zealand's dairy capital - as well as in the Northland and Manawatū-Whanganui regions. When his family relocated to Tasmania at age 13, farming remained firmly in his blood.

Lisa, now 29, was born and raised in Burnie, Tasmania. Although she didn't grow up on the land, she quickly fell in love with farm life. Their adventure began when the pair met at just 16 and 14 years old.



Today, the Tuckers are in their first 50/50 sharemilking role on a 58-hectare property, milking 240 cows after calving down 250. Their herd is affectionately described as "liquorice allsorts" - a mix of larger Friesians, smaller Jerseys, Brown Swiss, and various crossbreds, averaging 500 kg liveweight. While they're happy with the size of the cows, they're focused on lifting milk solids, fat, protein, and fertility to strengthen long-term herd performance.

They milk twice daily on a spring-only seasonal system through a simple 16-bale herringbone shed. Last season, under previous owners, the farm produced 480 kgMS per cow. This season, wet winter weather conditions resulted in greater-than-expected hay and silage purchases.

Despite this, Blair and Lisa are still targeting 480 kgMS per cow by reducing grain and supplement use and increasing grass utilisation.

Their breeding programme is equally strategic, using a small team of bulls. KiwiCross® sires cover most of the herd, and Friesians are used for the smaller cows. A double PG programme before the start of AI was followed by a third PG on non-cyclers.

Three weeks in, they inserted CIDRs into roughly 40 cows. Within four weeks, every cow had received a straw, and they tailed off with high quality Jersey bulls to complete a nine-week mating programme. A synchrony programme was also carried out on the heifers, using sexed Friesian semen on selected animals. The results so far - including a six-week in-calf rate of 73% and a 15% empty rate over the nine-week mating - signals a good foundation for herd improvement.

Life for the Tuckers is centred around the farm and their two children - Charlotte, 10, and Jackson, 8 - who love getting involved whenever they can.

With only Blair on farm full-time, Lisa contributes where possible but also works full-time off the farm to help maintain financial stability. The couple balances the intensity of dairy life with camping trips and time outdoors as a family.

Financial growth is a core driver for the young couple. Beyond sharemilking, they've begun investing in real estate and also lease a 175-acre block nearby, where they currently run 295 head of young stock. "We're focusing hard on the young stock to build equity," Blair explains.

Still, he offers simple but powerful advice for others starting out: "Go hard while you're young. Aim for big numbers early. Get into contract milking as soon as you can, and milk as many cows as possible."

A key influence on their journey from the beginning has been neighbouring farmers, Rowan Priest and Rob Gair whom they met in 2019. "They were willing to share their experience and advice and became our mentors" says Lisa. "Now that we have our own herd, we rely on Rowan, who is our local LIC representative to guide us. He practices what he preaches," says Blair.

"He looked at our cows, their size, their production, and helped us choose the right bull team. He makes everything easy to understand. We really appreciate his help and advice."

Their story is still unfolding, and while they appreciate the herd they currently have, they're keen to lift production and strengthen fertility, with a clear focus on shaping the herd into something they can be truly proud of in the years ahead.

Why Choose LIC Genetics?

In an increasingly competitive dairy landscape, genetics is one of the most powerful levers a farmer can pull to lift productivity, strengthen resilience, and improve profitability. LIC (Livestock Improvement Corporation) brings more than a century of farmer-led innovation to this task. With deep scientific capability, a rigorous Sire-Proving Scheme, and unrivalled scale, LIC delivers a practical pathway to better herds and better business outcomes for Australian farmers. Here's what sets LIC genetics apart.

Farmer-owned, farmer-focused

LIC's foundation as a farmer-owned co-operative matters. It carries a responsibility to deliver value where it counts: on-farm. Decisions are considered carefully by balancing the needs of farmer shareholders, and the organisation's priorities (genetic merit, fertility, efficiency, and reliability) by ensuring they align with day-to-day realities rather than theoretical models. For Australian farmers, this gives assurance that LIC is built on a strong platform dedicated to genetics, services, and data tools designed to be practical, measurable, and commercially relevant.

Scale that delivers quality and reliability

Few organisations in the global dairy industry operate at LIC's scale. In New Zealand, LIC conducts approximately **3.6 million inseminations annually, covering** around **three out of every four cows. This scale is supported** by the dispatch of **more than 100,000 straws per day** at the peak of the season, and a network **of up to 1,000 AB Technicians.**

This scale is not just a statistic; it's a quality assurance mechanism. High volumes enable robust logistics, repeatable processes, and continuous improvement. For Australian farmers, that means reliable supply, consistent performance, and a service model refined by decades of seasonal pressure.

Complementing insemination services is LIC's end-to-end laboratory infrastructure. Each year, LICs Animal Health Lab processes **2.2 million samples,** while the GeneMark lab handles **600,000** genomic and related samples. LIC's herd testing service analyses **11 million** milk samples annually, providing an evidence-rich foundation for selection decisions. The result is a data ecosystem in which every sample tightens the feedback loop between genetic prediction and real-world performance.

A Sire Proving Scheme built to find the elite

Genetic progress depends on choosing the right sires - and LIC's sire proving scheme is renowned for its scrutiny and selectivity. The pipeline begins with the analysis of some of the best cows in the country, identified through database data. Contract matings are then organised to produce bull calves each year, which are genomically screened. From this group, only around 10% ultimately graduate to market. This intentionally narrow funnel ensures that only elite bulls - validated by both genomic information and real-world herd performance - reach farmers

The Sire Proving Scheme is amplified by embryo and contract mating work. Each year, LIC organises **5,000** contract matings and produces **over 2,500 embryos** to enhance the breeding of the next generation of elite bulls.

This disciplined, multi-stage selection process improves the quality of that next generation, and gives farmers confidence in LIC's breeding scheme.

Innovation that drives faster genetic gain

LIC's R&D focus targets the traits that matter most on farm: fertility, efficiency, robustness, and sustainability. The programme spans genomics, reproduction, animal health, and climate-relevant traits such as heat tolerance. Notably, the adoption of genomic selection has materially accelerated progress; LIC reports that genomic technology lifted annual genetic gain from **about 9 gBW (2012-2016)** to about **16 gBW (2017-2020),** and that **more than 50% of straws since 2021** have been from genomic bulls. For farmers, that means today's sires are not only better than yesterday's - they get better, faster.

Australian herds face diverse pressures - heat events, variable pasture conditions, and farm sustainability issues. LIC's work on genomics and heat-tolerant genetics in particular, aligns closely with these pressures, offering pathways to herds that can perform consistently in challenging conditions while keeping pace with productivity expectations.

Efficiency: converting feed to milk - profitably

At the heart of LIC's breeding philosophy is production efficiency: more kilograms of milk solids per kilogram of liveweight. In practical terms, the most efficient cows **produce more, weigh less, conceive more reliably,** and **emit less per unit of output.**

LIC's long-term focus has lifted production efficiency from **~55% in the early 1990s to around 80% today,** underscoring a sustained, compound improvement in how effectively cows turn feed into saleable milk.

For Australian farmers coping with rising input costs and tight margins, this matters. Efficient cows require less feed to achieve the same (or better) output. They also tend to have superior fertility, reducing empty rates and replacement costs. Over time, those efficiencies accumulate - helping with the cost of production, making on-farm tasks more manageable via predictable conception and calving and strengthening the farm's overall resilience.

Data as a decision engine

Better genetics start with better information. LIC supports data-driven decision-making through herd testing, genomic profiling, and economic modelling. The philosophy is simple: measure, rank, act.

Herd testing: Individual cow milk sampling identifies top performers and under-achievers. This granularity enables precise culling and breeding decisions.

Animal health and genomic testing: Disease, pregnancy, and genotype information reduce uncertainty and improve selection accuracy - especially useful when rearing replacement heifers from the best dams.

MINDA to rank and report: LIC's herd management software (MINDA) helps farmers rank animals and visualise herd structure by genetic merit, making selection lists and mating plans clearer and more objective.

These services feed directly into our breeding programme, enhancing its accuracy and robustness, and ultimately supporting better bull selection decisions that benefit farmers. While some of these products may not be directly available to Australian farmers, the data collected from them strengthens the reliability of the bulls we supply in the Australian market. Additionally, LIC places a strong emphasis on validation.

As the volume and diversity of data grow, the accuracy of predictions improves, sharpening the reliability of on-farm decisions season after season.

Translating LIC's strengths to Australian conditions

While LIC's heritage is New Zealand, its solutions travel well - especially to pasture-based systems common across Australia Here are four practical ways Australian farmers can leverage LIC genetics:

1. Target fertility first

Improved conception underpins everything - calving pattern, lactation length, and replacement planning. Selecting sires with proven fertility traits shortens calving spreads, reduces non-productive days, and stabilises production curves.

2. Prioritise feed-to-milk efficiency

In regions where pasture growth varies by season and water availability, efficient cows deliver more milk solids per kilogram of liveweight. LIC's focus on efficiency helps farmers protect margins when feed is tight or costly.

3. Plan for heat stress

Heat events depress intake and reproduction. Genetics with better heat tolerance can mitigate performance dips and support steadier reproductive outcomes across warm periods.

4. Build replacements from the top of the herd

Breeding your best cows with elite LIC sires over successive seasons will lift the herd's average genetic merit through your replacement heifers, compounding gains in production and fertility.

A practical roadmap for adoption

To capture the full value of LIC genetics, treat breeding as a managed, data-rich process rather than a seasonal purchase:

Establish a clear breeding objective: Define the balance of traits you need - production, fertility, efficiency, robustness - anchored to your farm's system and market.

Measure routinely: Commit to measuring milk production and where possible, health screening. The more often you measure, the sharper your selection decisions will be.

Rank and select: Rank animals by genetic merit and lifetime performance. Mate the best cows to the best sires; use beef or SGL Compact® semen strategically on the bottom end.

Review annually: Revisit results each season, updating trait priorities and sire selections in line with farm performance and conditions.

The bottom line

LIC's combination of co-operative purpose, industrial-scale capability, rigorous genetics, and data-first decision support gives Australian farmers a dependable partner for herd improvement.

The organisation's track record - millions of inseminations, tens of millions of milk samples analysed, and a sire proving scheme that markets only the top ten percent - creates a simple, compelling proposition: genetics you can trust, backed by systems that deliver.

For farmers aiming to build herds that are efficient, fertile, and suited to a warming climate and evolving markets, LIC genetics provide a practical, proven path to progress.

With clear objectives, routine measurement, and disciplined selection, the benefits compound - animal by animal, season by season - into a more resilient, more profitable dairy business.

A selection of our new bulls for 2026

Holstein Friesian

122085 HAZAEL BE OPTIMUM-ET S2F

The optimum balance

A rare combination of high milk volume and daughters that achieve strong six-week-in calf performance. With excellent management traits, it is no surprise New Zealand farmers are enjoying milking these daughters.

$465/90% gBW REL

Breeding Details	
NASIS	NZGOPTIMUM
Breed	F16
Pedigree	EQUATOR x MASON

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS — Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values			169 Daughters
Milk Volume (litres)	1119	Fertility %	3.3
Fat kg	63	Body Condition Score	-0.01
Fat %	4.8	Functional Survival %	2.8
Protein kg	38	Cow CD /REL	1.7/83
Protein %	3.9	Heifer CD/REL	5.4/47
SCC	0.35	Gestation Length (days)	-0.8
Liveweight	55	Beta-Casein	A1/A2

NZ Evaluation Data — Traits other than production	gBV	-0.5 0 0.5 1.0
Management		
Adaptability to Milking	0.54	
Shed Temperament	0.55	
Milking Speed	0.18	
Overall Opinion	0.57	
Conformation (116 daughters TOP tested)		
Stature	0.63	
Capacity	0.10	
Rump Angle	0.56	
Rump Width	0.68	
Legs	-0.17	
Udder Support	0.22	
Front Udder	-0.19	
Rear Udder	0.22	
Front Teat Placement	0.07	
Rear Teat Placement	-0.24	
Teat Length	0.69	
Udder Overall	0.21	
Dairy Conformation	0.29	

23/01/2026

Holstein Friesian

Ultraplus

122034 BUELIN MB BLAST-OFF S1F

Blast-Off: Fuel your herd's potential

A balanced all-rounder delivering impressive milksolids, high fat and protein percentages, all in a moderate stature. Daughters stand out for exceptional udders, and his easy-calving figures make him ideal for heifers. His pedigree runs deep - his Beamer-daughter dam produced 868 kgMS as a two-year-old and topped 1,000 kgMS over six lactations. Performance that starts strong and keeps building.

$446/87% gBW REL

Breeding Details	
NASIS	NZGBLASTOFF
Breed	F15J1
Pedigree	BAKERBOY x BEAMER

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS — Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values			93 Daughters
Milk Volume (litres)	569	Fertility %	1.5
Fat kg	45	Body Condition Score	-0.04
Fat %	5.0	Functional Survival %	1.9
Protein kg	36	Cow CD /REL	-0.4/98
Protein %	4.2	Heifer CD/REL	4.9/59
SCC	0.25	Gestation Length (days)	-5.6
Liveweight	29	Beta-Casein	A1/A2

NZ Evaluation Data — Traits other than production	gBV	-0.5 0 0.5 1.0
Management		
Adaptability to Milking	0.18	
Shed Temperament	0.19	
Milking Speed	0.08	
Overall Opinion	0.16	
Conformation (87 daughters TOP tested)		
Stature	0.46	
Capacity	0.15	
Rump Angle	-0.46	
Rump Width	0.55	
Legs	0.08	
Udder Support	0.72	
Front Udder	0.63	
Rear Udder	0.58	
Front Teat Placement	0.52	
Rear Teat Placement	0.82	
Teat Length	-0.74	
Udder Overall	0.80	
Dairy Conformation	0.24	

23/01/2026

KiwiCross®

522005 PAYNES DALLAS-ET

Power, production, perfection

Unmatched KiwiCross Sire Performance. Delivering a combined milk solids percentage of over 11%, this bull outperforms every other KiwiCross sire on the market. Recognised as the highest capacity KiwiCross bull alive, he offers exceptional strength, efficiency, and production power for progressive dairy systems.

gBW $511/89% REL

Breeding Details	
NASIS	NZGDALLAS
Breed	J9F7
Pedigree	HONENUI x BECKON

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values			114 Daughters
Milk Volume (litres)	-444	Fertility %	3.1
Fat kg	61	Body Condition Score	0.22
Fat %	6.4	Functional Survival %	1.7
Protein kg	21	Cow CD /REL	-0.9/98
Protein %	4.8	Heifer CD/REL	0.6/65
SCC	-0.02	Gestation Length (days)	2.0
Liveweight	63	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NZ Evaluation Data		Traits other than production			
Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.05				
Shed Temperament	0.06				
Milking Speed	-0.03				
Overall Opinion	0.06				
Conformation (99 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	0.14				
Capacity	1.23				
Rump Angle	0.38				
Rump Width	-0.13				
Legs	-0.02				
Udder Support	0.32				
Front Udder	0.48				
Rear Udder	0.26				
Front Teat Placement	-0.15				
Rear Teat Placement	-0.04				
Teat Length	-0.03				
Udder Overall	0.28				
Dairy Conformation	0.97				

23/01/2026

KiwiCross®

522036 BURMEISTERS BEASTIE-ET

Beastie by name. Powerful by nature

A Slipstream son combining exceptional capacity with outstanding udder conformation. His daughters are a pleasure to milk - delivering impressive volume while maintaining excellent fertility. Strength, structure, and performance all in one complete package.

gBW $453/88% REL

Breeding Details	
NASIS	NZGBEASTIE
Breed	F8J8
Pedigree	SLIPSTREAM x INSPIRED

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values			91 Daughters
Milk Volume (litres)	363	Fertility %	1.9
Fat kg	47	Body Condition Score	0.12
Fat %	5.2	Functional Survival %	1.1
Protein kg	14	Cow CD /REL	-0.9/75
Protein %	4.0	Heifer CD/REL	-0.3/44
SCC	-0.13	Gestation Length (days)	-0.4
Liveweight	-10	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NZ Evaluation Data		Traits other than production			
Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.55				
Shed Temperament	0.54				
Milking Speed	0.59				
Overall Opinion	0.64				
Conformation (80 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	-0.45				
Capacity	0.60				
Rump Angle	0.25				
Rump Width	0.60				
Legs	0.01				
Udder Support	0.77				
Front Udder	0.54				
Rear Udder	1.18				
Front Teat Placement	0.01				
Rear Teat Placement	0.99				
Teat Length	-0.39				
Udder Overall	0.76				
Dairy Conformation	0.67				

23/01/2026

Jersey

322001 PAYNES TITUS EXCELSIOR-ET

The #1 proven Jersey bull in New Zealand

Combining elite production with extreme fertility, this sire delivers where it counts. Backed by powerhouse genetics, his dam produced an outstanding 745 kg milksolids in her last lactation - a true testament to performance, efficiency, and profitability.

$583/89% gBW REL

Breeding Details	
NASIS	NZGEXCELSIOR
Breed	J16
Pedigree	TITUS x INTEGRITY

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values			106 Daughters
Milk Volume (litres)	-403	Fertility %	9.5
Fat kg	40	Body Condition Score	0.12
Fat %	5.9	Functional Survival %	4.1
Protein kg	8	Cow CD /REL	-1.7/99
Protein %	4.5	Heifer CD/REL	-7.8/92
SCC	-0.52	Gestation Length (days)	-2.2
Liveweight	-48	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NZ Evaluation Data		Traits other than production
Management	gBV	-0.5 0 0.5 1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.23	
Shed Temperament	0.23	
Milking Speed	0.19	
Overall Opinion	0.28	
Conformation (98 daughters TOP tested)		
Stature	-1.17	
Capacity	0.09	
Rump Angle	0.02	
Rump Width	0.07	
Legs	0.02	
Udder Support	0.73	
Front Udder	0.67	
Rear Udder	0.89	
Front Teat Placement	0.22	
Rear Teat Placement	0.32	
Teat Length	-0.11	
Udder Overall	0.85	
Dairy Conformation	0.29	

23/01/2026

Beef

Breeder: Kakahu Stud

722400 KAKAHU MILESTONE

Setting milestones

Milestone continues to set the standard for Charolais. His results from the B+LNZ Genetics Dairy Beef Progeny Test sees Milestone ranked 12th of 170 sires for his beef x dairy progeny to reach Weaning Weight in the shortest timeframe (76 days).

Milestone's beef x dairy calves had a lighter Birth Weight than the 11 sires above him, and he had a shorter gestation length than all but three of them. Milestone is a true outlier. Within the NZ Charolais evaluation, he's in the top 5% for Calving Ease and top 1% for Gestation Length. His growth figures place him in the top 1% of the breed for Yearling Weight and top 1% for Carcase Weight.

Within-breed Evaluation			99th	75th	50th	25th	1st		%rank
Dairy Significance	EBV								
Calving Ease	12.7	Hard						Easy	5
Gestation Length	-9.7	Long						Short	1
Birth Weight	-3.5	Heavy						Light	5
Beef Significance	EBV								
600 Day Weight	57	Light						Heavy	5
Carcase Weight	36	Light						Heavy	5
Eye Muscle Area	1.8	Less						More	50
Intramuscular Fat	1.3	Less						More	1

Proven Progeny Averages			
Data Source	Gestation Length	Birth Weight	Calving Difficulty
DBPT	279.9 days	38.4kg	
MINDA®	280.3 days		0.98%

Data Source: 01/2026

All LIC Charolais are homozygous polled and are a great marking option. The breed adds muscle and conformation to a dairy beef carcass and are a commonly used terminal sire in commercial beef operations.

These bulls offer a short gestation length and easy calving.

Growing a Life on the Land: Luke & Hannah's Sharefarming Journey

Luke and Hannah with their children: building family and farming a future together.

For young dairy farmers Luke (30) and Hannah (27) Aldridge, life on the land has never been about taking the easy road - it's been about purpose, persistence and building something meaningful together. Now in their third year of 50/50 sharefarming, the couple has stepped into a new chapter on a 100-hectare farm in Togari, a move that reflects their growing passion for dairying.

Their backgrounds in farming couldn't be more different. Hannah grew up hobby farming, picking up milking work during school before leaving home at 17 to pursue full-time dairy work. Luke's connection to dairy came through family - although his own parents left the farm when he was four, his uncle remained on a property in the northeast. Luke spent years visiting, helping out, and slowly catching the farming bug. After finishing school, he jumped at the first full-time dairy job he could find and has now been in the district for 12 years.

Today they milk 340 cows - mostly "fruit salad" crossbreds, black and brown - with the farm previously peaking at around 360 to 370 cows under a split-calving system. This season, they hope to achieve around 470 milksolids per cow, despite battling a challenging, wet spring. "We peaked in December instead of November," Hannah says. "We're still learning how to manage the wet." They feed grass and around 4 kg of grain, while still fine-tuning stocking rates and pasture management as they settle into the property.

Breeding is where their passion shines brightest. Both speak enthusiastically about shaping the herd they want: a consistent, efficient 480-500 kg crossbred cow suited to Togari's wet conditions. Because they started out acquiring cows from various places, they inherited a lot of smaller Jerseys and mixed types - something they are steadily refining through careful, thoughtful breeding decisions.

Their bull team sits at around four sires - small but intentionally chosen. They select for production, component percentages, efficiency traits, and a size profile that fits their environment. "We've really appreciated the support of our LIC representative, Rowan, who has taught us how to read the LIC catalogue and advise us on our selections, knowing exactly what we are breeding for. Rowan has trained us to understand the bull book so well that we're now confident making our selections independently - in fact, we often tell him which bulls we want. Once we've chosen the team, I already know which bull I'm going to put over which cow before she even comes on heat," Luke says. "Genetics is our passion," Hannah says. "Nobody wants to milk cows they don't enjoy looking at. It's worth investing a bit more to get efficient cows you love working with - and cows that are going to make you money."

They've also committed strongly to using sexed semen, with no conventional semen used and a deliberate aim to minimise non-replacement calves. Their mating programme includes synchronising the herd ahead of joining to reduce labour peaks and improve staff sustainability.

For all the ambition, life is busy - very busy. With baby number five having arrived in February, the couple jokes that this is the third time they've welcomed a child in the first year of a new farming job. But they're grounded by what matters most. "Family keeps us balanced," Hannah says. "It reminds us to enjoy life, be present for the people we love, and to keep faith at the centre of our lives."

Asked what advice they'd give other young couples starting out, they don't hesitate. "The most expensive decision is to do nothing," says Hannah. Luke adds, "Don't try to do it all yourself. Involve more people in your decision-making, set clear goals, and think long-term. Spend less time just working and more time working out what you're working towards."

Their farming journey is still young, but it's shaped by passion, purpose, partnership - and a deep commitment to building a life, a herd, and a future they believe in.

From Handshakes to High Rainfall: Rowan Priest & Rob Gair's Sharefarming Journey

How a Kiwi and an Englishman swapped an ownership dream for scalable success across Victoria, Gippsland and North West Tasmania.

On a winter morning in North West Tasmania - where rain can blow sideways and paddocks turn to puddles overnight - Rob moves the herd with quiet efficiency. The system bends to whatever the season delivers, with cows stood off in the toughest winter conditions to protect the best paddocks, and resilient cows carrying milk through the dry of summer. It's practical, gritty farming - the culmination of a 13-year journey that began with a bold leap across the Tasman.

Rowan brought a deep New Zealand grounding - nine years as a 50:50 sharemilker in the Waikato, including breeding work that saw him become the only breeder to have two bulls inducted into the LIC Hall of Fame: Solaris and Sierra. Rob's path was different. Raised on a small sheep unit in Northumberland, England, he moved to New Zealand at the age of 18 and built his career managing herds there. The duo teamed up in 2011 and made the leap to Australia in 2013, bringing together pragmatic stock sense and disciplined business thinking.

Chasing a dream

They arrived in northern Victoria in 2013 with a clear goal: to own their own dairy farm. At the time, the numbers stacked up - lower entry costs than New Zealand, warm weather, water on tap, and a buoyant milk price under the Murray Goulburn co-operative.
"It was our dream," Rowan recalls. "Fifty hectares, 150 Jersey cows, tidy infrastructure - everything set up just right."

But the honeymoon didn't last. Water prices spiked, dry years bit hard, and Murray Goulburn's collapse shifted the risk-reward balance. "We could have stayed. But we'd have been standing still." Rowan says. They sold the dream - and went looking for a better model.

Patience and resilience

The first herd they sourced for Victoria had no known breeding and horns - a far cry from the well-bred Jersey herd they had initially signed up for (and later walked away from when they had deteriorated before settlement).

"We paid $800 a head for in-calf cows, took the horns off, and got on with it," Rowan says. "Not pretty - but it got us started."

Within a year they blanketed the herd with Solaris, (Rowan's Hall of Fame KiwiCross® bull) a bold move Rowan would refine in hindsight. "Over average Jerseys, we'd have been better to kick off with a Friesian for hybrid vigour." That pivot - toward a predominantly Friesian-cross herd - would become one of their compounding advantages in tougher seasons.

The early years were also a battle against somatic cell count (SCC). "We averaged around 300,000 at the start," Rob says. "It took strategic herd testing and breeding discipline to turn it around."

Today, they average 50,000 SCC, a shift reflected in a run of Milk Quality awards - including multiple Dairy Australia Gold/Silver Star achievements and a 2025 corporate milk quality award (the best of 15 farms).

"Profit over production. That's the point," Rob says. "If the business makes money, everyone's happy."

Finding a better model: Gippsland's 50:50 bet

Their next move was a 50:50 sharefarming role in South Gippsland, milking around 250 cows for elderly owners. "That experience crystallised it," Rowan says. "Sharefarming was the path - scalable, aligned, and good for building equity and skill."

As they looked to step up, they found that standardised 50:50 contracts were rare on the mainland - different interpretations, varied terms, lots of ambiguity. Tasmania, however, offered something different.

Across Bass Strait: Kiwi systems, clear contracts

In Tasmania, the pair connected with a corporate operation run Kiwi-style, under an operations manager who understood New Zealand's Federated Farmers 50:50 template. The alignment was immediate.

Starting with 350 cows, they quickly stepped up to a 500-cow platform, where they've been building for five years.

Farming the wettest paddocks (and the driest summers)

The Togari district is among the wettest in Tasmania, and their farm is the wettest in the district. It's a management puzzle they've learned to solve:

- Winter: stand cows off and use sacrifice paddocks to protect the base.
- Summer: rely on the farm's inherent moisture, plant turnips and summer crops, and avoid masking pasture deficits with heavy grain.
- Feed policy: about 1.6 tonnes of grain per cow per year - "not low, not over the top."

"We try to keep costs tight," Rob says. "The herd's genetics help; LIC crossbreds hold on longer when it turns dry."

Building a better herd

From a low base, the herd has been consistently lifted:

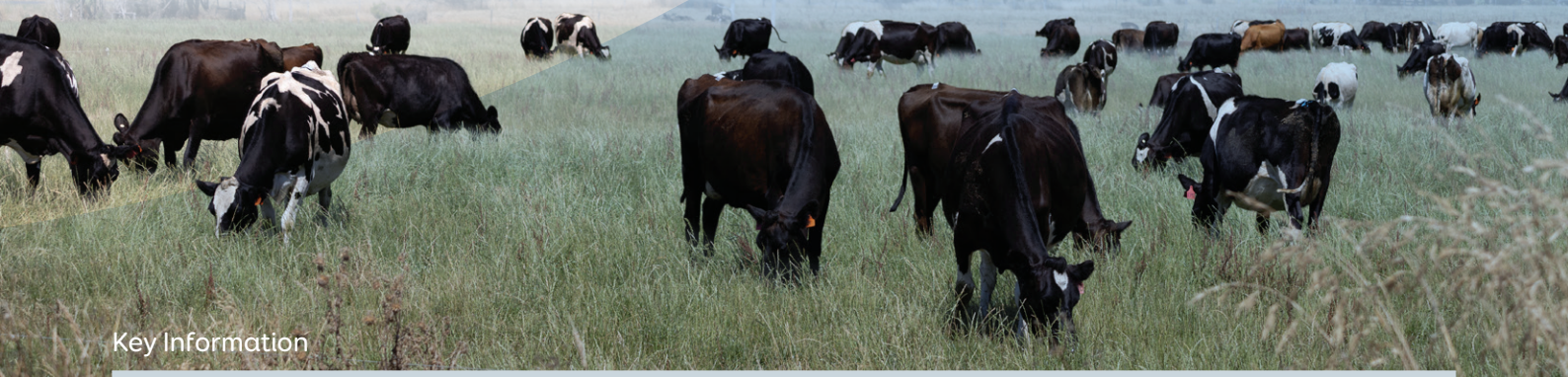
- Breeding discipline: elite sires for years; the Fast Forward Team® for the past two seasons.
- Homebred replacements: raising their own heifers since 2013.
- Hybrid vigour: a deliberate shift toward Friesian-cross resilience.

This is a herd designed to work in the real world - wet winters, uneven summers, and no irrigation. "We started with cows we weren't proud of," Rowan says. "Now it's a herd we've built, carefully, year after year."

The business lens: Clear roles, shared decisions

Rowan now works full-time off-farm for LIC Australia, while Rob leads day-to-day operations, supported by one full-time and one casual staff member. Their decisions are shared 50:50, true to the partnership they've built. Beyond the farm gate, Rob and Rowan have invested in rental properties in both Australia and New Zealand.

A guiding principle came early from their operations lead: "If I'm making money, then you're making money. We're all happy." It stuck - and it explains their approach to inputs, pasture management, breeding, and growth.



Key Information

Metric	Units	22/23	23/24	24/25
Dairy farm effective area	Ha	140	140	140
Maximum cow numbers	cows	500	500	500
Stocking rate (dairy cows)	cows/ha	3.6	3.6	3.6
Cows at peak milk	cow	500	500	500
Production total	kgMS	220.000	213000	199900
Production per ha	kgMS/ha	1571	1521	1427
Production per cow	kgMS/cow	440	426	400
Average weight of cows	kg	460	460	460
Average somatic cell count	cells/ml	50	50	70
Mastitis	cases	very little	very little	very little
Lameness	cases	as above	as above	as above
6 week in calf rate	%	over 80 %	over 80%	over 80%
Not in calf rate	%	9 %	10%	16%
Mating length	days	70	70	70
Pasture & crop eaten (homegrown feed)	tDM/ha	-	15	15
Imported feed fed (grain)	t grain / cow	1.6	1.6	1.6
Imported supplement per cow (hay/silage)	tDM/cow	0.5	0.5	0.5
Nitrogen fertiliser applied per ha (urea)	kg Urea/ha	515	515	515

The Basics of Animal Improvement

Genetic gain is widely understood in global dairy breeding - and while the formula is simple, the progress it delivers is steady, cumulative, and incredibly powerful over time. LIC Australia draws directly from the world-leading genetic engine of LIC New Zealand, giving farmers access to the same disciplined breeding approach that has transformed New Zealand's national herd.

Proven long-term genetic progress

Over the past 30 years, LIC has delivered outstanding improvements in milksolids across all our main breeds in New Zealand.

Holstein Friesian Progress

Trait	30 Years Ago	Today
Fat %	4.1%	4.8%
Protein %	3.3%	3.8%

Elite LIC Friesian bulls now exceed 9.6% total milk solids.

Crossbred Progress

Trait	30 Years Ago	Today
Fat %	4.9%	5.5%
Protein %	3.8%	4.1%

Elite LIC KiwiCross® bulls now exceed 11% total milk solids.

These gains underline the power of sustained, disciplined breeding paired with rigorous data.

The Genetic Gain formula

Genetic Gain = (Selection Intensity x Genetic Variation x Selection Accuracy) / Generation Interval in Years

Genetic gain is governed by a few essential levers. While we can't control everything, the areas we **can** influence make an enormous difference.

LIC NZ'S breeding strategy

LIC's breeding goals are clear and strongly aligned to pasture-based, cost-efficient dairy systems. The aim is to breed cows that convert feed into farmer profit - cows that are productive, fertile, healthy, and easy to manage.

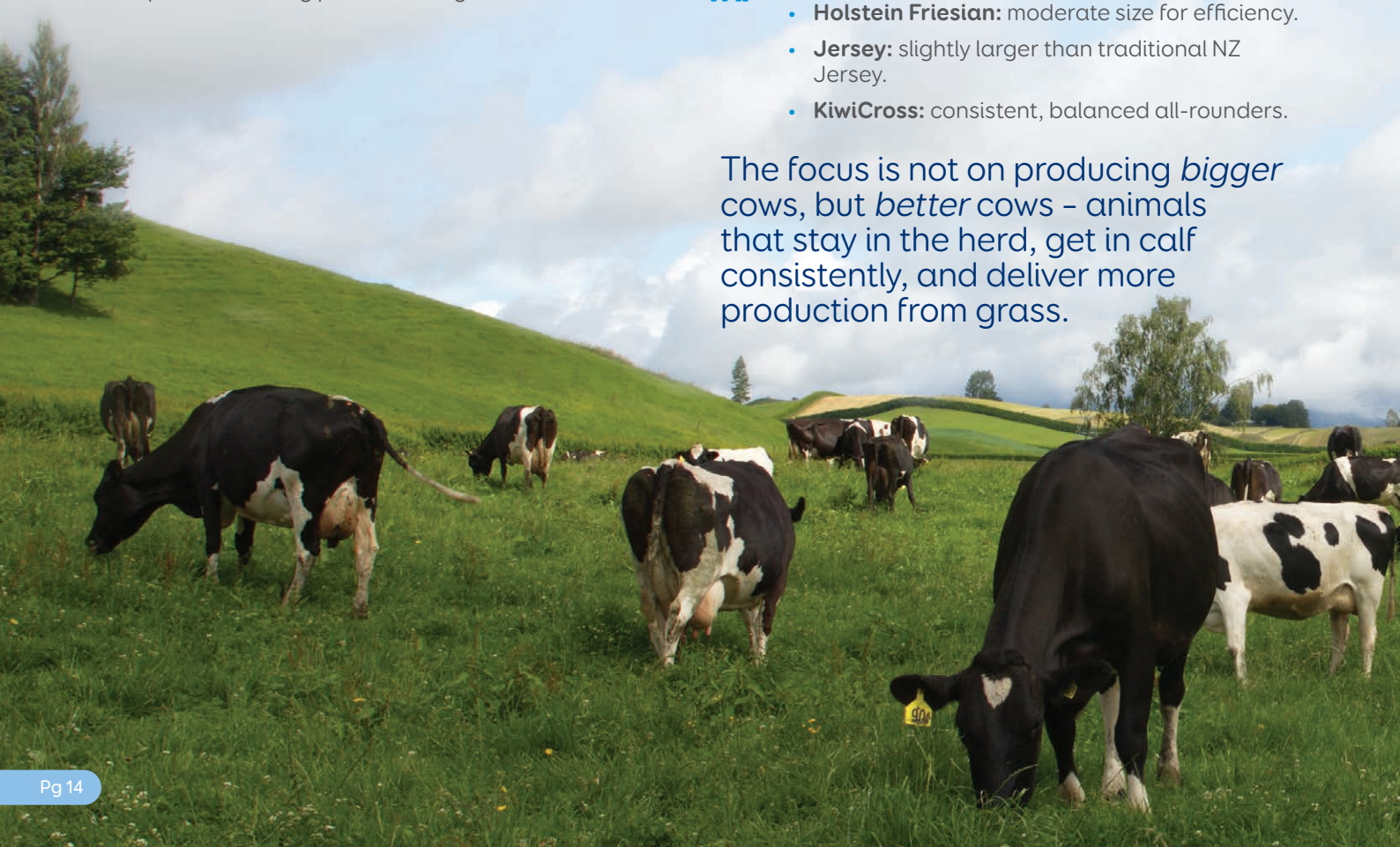
Key goals include:

- High genetic merit (high BW).
- Strong pasture-based efficiency (high production per kg liveweight).
- Aggressive grazers.
- Excellent fertility (high 6-week in-calf rate).
- Longevity (average > 4.5 lactations).
- Good temperament and fast milking speed.
- Strong, durable udders.
- Easy-care cows suited to commercial systems.

By breeding:

- **Holstein Friesian:** moderate size for efficiency.
- **Jersey:** slightly larger than traditional NZ Jersey.
- **KiwiCross:** consistent, balanced all-rounders.

The focus is not on producing *bigger* cows, but *better* cows - animals that stay in the herd, get in calf consistently, and deliver more production from grass.



The levers of genetic gain we control

1. Selection intensity

LIC applies extremely high selection pressure:

- From **4.5 million** dairy cows and young stock, **less than 1%** qualify as potential bull mothers.
- These cows must be herd tested at least three times per year, calve as two-year-olds, recalve as three-year-olds within the bounds of New Zealand's tight mating lengths, and maintain strong fertility.
- Each year, contract matings produce genomically screened bull calves, of which only about 10% graduate to market.

This intensity is one of the key drivers behind LIC's world-class genetics.

2. Accuracy of selection

Accuracy is only as good as the data behind it – and LIC's data set is unmatched.

- New Zealand has the **world's largest recorded crossbred cow population.**
- **82%** of NZ cows are herd tested annually.
- LIC operates one of the **last major progeny testing schemes** globally, ensuring genomic predictions remain reliable and validated – a responsibility to its farmer-owners.
- The Sire Proving Scheme consists of:
  - **160 herds**
  - **79,000 cows**
  - Around **11,000 daughters** from progeny test sires each year.
- Every daughter has:
  - Confirmed parentage
  - Full herd testing
  - TOP (Traits Other than Production) classification
  - Liveweight measurement to validate production efficiency measures.

This robust data underpins the accuracy of LIC's genomic evaluations and ensures farmers receive predictable, reliable performance.

3. Generation interval

Shortening the generation interval fast-tracks genetic progress.

LIC does this through:

- **An aggressive embryo transfer (ET) programme** that accelerates the turnover of elite genetics by guaranteeing that LIC can screen bull calves from the most elite yearling females in the industry.
- **Extensive use of genomically tested young sires,** reducing the time between genetic improvement and on-farm impact.

The result is faster gain, earlier access to superior genetics, and a more progressive national herd.

In summary

LIC is proud to bring our proven genetic engine to Australian farmers.

With disciplined selection, unmatched data accuracy, and cutting-edge genomic and ET programmes, LIC continues to deliver cows that thrive in pasture-based systems – fertile, efficient, robust animals that return profit year after year.

Reliability - an important part of the BW consideration

Choosing bulls to sire the next generation of replacements is a complex decision. Which bull should you pick? A team of five or ten? Should you opt for daughter proven sires, genomic sires, or a combination of both?

Breeding Worth (BW) is a key measure of genetic merit - and alongside it sits another very important figure - Reliability.

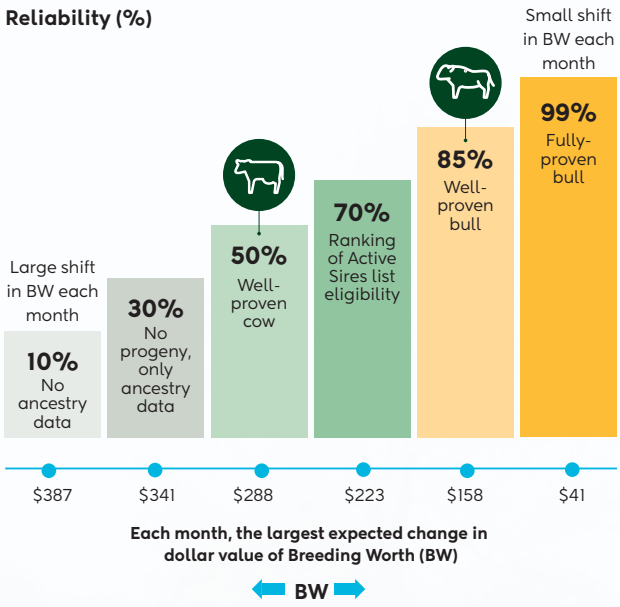
BW	Rel
327	90

What is reliability?

Each trait has an associated reliability figure that indicates how much information contributes to its evaluation. Measured on a scale from 0 to 100%, reliability reflects the confidence in the data behind the genetic merit estimation. The higher the percentage, the more likely the figure will remain stable as additional data becomes available.

The more information (ancestry, progeny, and animal's own) contributing to the BW estimate, the higher the reliability figure will be, and the more confidence there is that the BW figure represents its true genetic merit.

Figure 1. Progression of reliability % with additional phenotypic records.



Source: dairynz.co.nz. Accessed 8/12/2025

Figure 1 shows the increase in reliability for individual bulls with increasing amounts and sources of information.

The x-axis shows the largest potential change, up or down, in BW given the level of reliability. The expected range of movement narrows as reliability increases. By the time the bull is fully proven, potential changes are much smaller.

Reliability grows with data

Bulls with only ancestry records have low reliability, around 30%. When evaluated using LIC's genomic screening, their gBW reliability increases to 55-60%, comparable to that of a well-proven cow. Once a bull has approximately 33 in-milk daughters contributing records, his reliability reaches 70% and he is considered 'daughter proven' - becoming eligible to enter the Ranking of Active Sires list.

Over time, as his daughters contribute more data across multiple lactations and more daughters are added, reliability can rise to the 'well-proven' status of about 85%. Fully proven bulls with a reliability score of 99% have over 10,000 daughters contributing data and their expected BW shifts are very small.

LIC genomics - early and ongoing reliability boosts

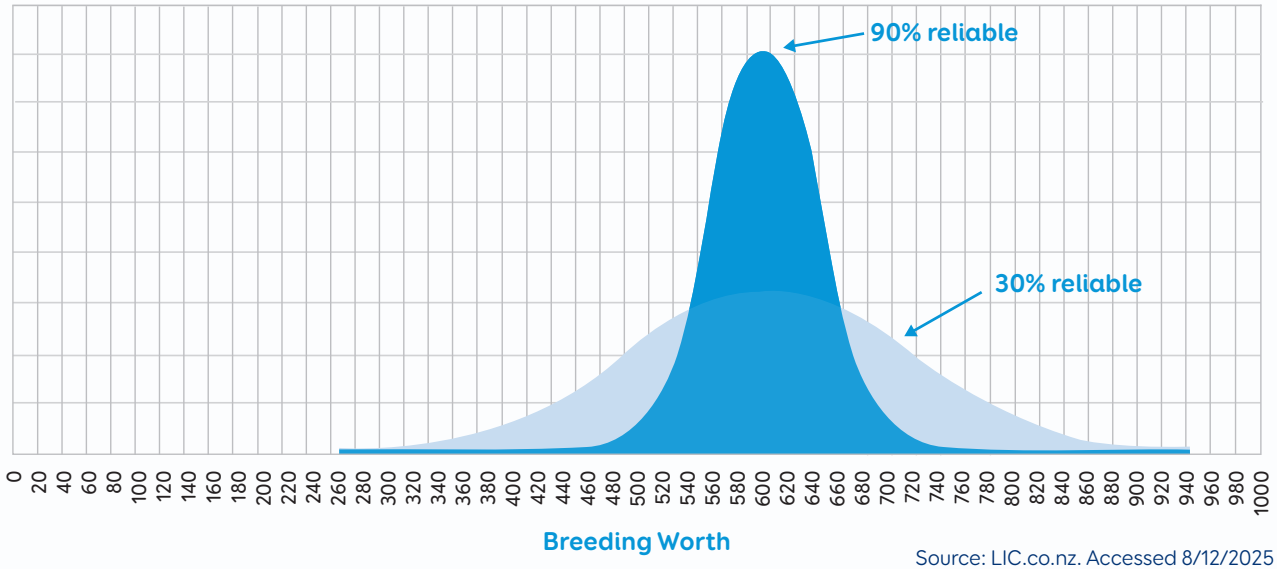
LIC's proprietary genomic evaluation tool, LIC GE, uses a unique SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) panel to analyse the entire New Zealand dairy population. It combines information from all breeds and animals simultaneously in a single-step evaluation and reports gBW. LIC's genomic predictions provide an early boost in reliability in its young bulls and improved predictions of traits that are expressed later in life, such as fertility and survival.

Ongoing collection of daughter phenotypes and genotypes is essential for good genomic predictions, enlarging the genomic reference population and keeping it up to date. Reliabilities of breeding values are an output of the animal evaluation model, and can vary between models and populations due to several factors including the size and makeup of the reference population. The New Zealand reference population is growing rapidly, and we are looking forward to some increases in individual genomic bull reliabilities over the coming years.

Crossbreds are inherently more difficult to evaluate genomically due to their genetic makeup. The NZ dairy population comprises over 60% Friesian x Jersey crossbred cows, providing the largest crossbred reference cow population in the world and enhancing the reliability of genomic estimates for KiwiCross® bulls.

LIC still operates a structured progeny test programme across a representative sample of NZ farms. Collecting high-quality phenotypic data on the daughters of the Sire Proving Scheme bulls allows us to validate the accuracy of genomic predictions and maintain the ability to market daughter proven bulls.

Figure 2. Potential true BW spread for an animal of 30% versus one of 90% reliability.



Source: LIC.co.nz. Accessed 8/12/2025

Why reliability matters when looking at bull proofs

Figure 2 illustrates the spread of the potential true BW for two bulls with identical BW but very different reliability figures. One bull, with 30% reliability, is based on ancestry data only, while the other, at 90% reliability is well-proven with around 100 daughters. Which bull would you have more confidence in to accurately reflect his true BW and genetic merit?

Knowing the correct ancestry has been assigned, and insights into the genes an animal carries, increases confidence in early estimates of genetic merit. Parentage verification ensures the correct dam and sire are assigned to the animal. Genomic evaluation assesses which genes the animal received from its parents - those associated with good or poor performance.

Breeding based on ancestry information alone has been rendered redundant by the power of LIC genomic evaluation in LIC's elite dairy genetics breeding programmes. LIC's genomic evaluation model leverages shorter generation intervals to accelerate genetic gain - identifying genetically elite animals earlier and with greater accuracy. This increases selection pressure and allows both males and females to enter breeding programmes without waiting years for daughter proofs.

While reducing the generation interval has huge benefits for the rate of genetic gain in the AI bull breeding programme, it is also important to consider the practical application of young bull teams on-farm. We can offer Australian farmers both the certainty of LIC's well-proven bulls and access to the latest genetics from the next crop of elite genomically evaluated sires.

Using a team of bulls

Breeding strategies vary amongst producers, and LIC Australia's district managers are skilled at incorporating reliabilities into breeding plans to achieve strong outcomes. Smart strategies can increase team reliability, manage re-ranking risk, and allow up-and-coming bulls to be used earlier. One approach is to combine genomic bulls with daughter proven bulls.

For those wishing to leverage genomic bulls more heavily, adjusting the bull team size can be effective. Choosing the right number of genomic bulls ensures that the team's delivered gBW aligns closely with the expected gBW, mitigating the impact of changes at the individual bull level. Selecting more bulls can further increase team gBW reliability but may reduce overall genetic gain by including lower-ranked bulls. Striking the right balance between gBW gain and target number of bulls helps maintain both risk management and genetic diversity across the herd. Table 1 provides estimates of team gBW reliability as the number of young genomic bulls increases.

The team approach is a fundamental principle of balanced breeding. Getting this balance right helps manage individual variation while breeding the best cows for your future herd. Whatever approach you choose, we are here to support you.

Table 1. Estimated team gBW reliability for varied numbers of young genomic bulls

Number of Young Genomic Bulls	1	2	3	4	5	6
Team gBW Reliability (%)*	55	78	90	95	98	98

(*approximations only)

Paynes Farm

A generational legacy of genetic excellence

The Payne family's dairying legacy began in Huntly in 1972, when Rex Payne purchased a neighbour's herd of cows. From humble beginnings, the Paynes have focused on increasing their herd's potential - a passion that now spans generations.

Fast-forward to 2003, the family relocated their operation to the heart of Cambridge, Waikato, purchasing the block that the farm operates on today. Over the past two decades, the transformation of the Payne's herd has been nothing short of remarkable.

The family's farm has continued to evolve under Rex's son Brad Payne, who inherited both the herd and his father's enthusiasm for breeding. Brad is committed to genetic improvement within his herd. Through careful selection, embryo transfer work and a deep understanding of cow families, he has elevated the herd to a new level. It's a true testament to the work of him and his father: building better cows, season after season.

Today, the Payne farm runs close to 800 cows, expanding steadily each year. The farm operates mostly as a system 3, with supplementary feeding to ensure the cows perform to their genetic potential year-round.

The farm is very much a family affair. Brad and his wife Claire manage the day-to-day, and father Rex steps in during peak times, particularly calving. They're supported by one part-time staff member, and together they manage their unique farm demands.

During calving, the Payne family rear more than 500 calves, a massive undertaking that reflects the commitment to their breeding operation.

L to R: Archie, Claire, Brad and Austin Payne

A bonus of the Payne farm's early calving schedule is the opportunity to rear and observe daughters from LIC's SPS bulls ahead of other SPS farmers. "It's really neat to have that slight head start," Brad says. "We get to see which of those bulls produce what daughters before most others do, helping bulls get there proofs as early as possible."

Calving runs from May 1st through to the end of September, which is different to traditional spring calving, but their decision is tactical. They aim to calve around 150 cows per month, or roughly five cows a day.

Brad says the decision to calve 150 cows per month isn't just about pacing, it's about practicality.

"If we had a normal spring calving and had to rear 550 calves all at once it'd be a massive workload. The feeders just wouldn't cope, and teaching calves to feed would be chaos."

To manage this volume, the farm uses automated calf feeders, which have become an essential part of the system. Each unit can feed up to 150 calves, and with three units on site, including a new high-capacity feeder that can handle 250 calves at a push.

"Teaching five calves a day is manageable. Teaching 40 in one go? That's a whole different story. Everything we do here is tailored to what works for us."

Brad's real passion lies in his breeding programme. He invests heavily in embryo transfer (ET) work to give him more opportunities to breed more replacements from his top cows each season.

Brad is also a trained AB technician, which means he not only inseminates all his own cows but also runs a local mini-AB round. His passion for breeding spills over into every phase of the reproduction cycle, from getting cows in calf to rearing the resulting calves. "I draft the cows and immediately I can inseminate them, just another way to be as efficient as possible in our layered system."

Brad Payne at Paynes farm

The ET programme is the heart of Brad's strategy. Each year, he carefully selects the top 60 dams based on their genomics, production records, and overall health. Using ET, he implants embryos into surrogate cows to increase the number of calves born from his elite dams. This technique allows him to produce multiple offspring from his very best cows each year, accelerating genetic progress compared to traditional breeding.

The results speak for themselves. With this intensive focus, the compounding ripple effect on his herd is unmistakable, better cows means higher production, and more efficiency. "The real reward is seeing each new group of heifers come into milk better than the last, that's when you know the breeding is working." Brad says, even dad Rex, who's been milking cows for decades, sees the difference. "Dad often says you can clearly see how far the herd has come, the cows we're milking now are just on another level."

Brad's interest in breeding has driven him to develop an intricate system. "The ET work started as a bit of a hobby over a decade ago, and now... well, I guess you could say it's out of control to a degree, but I just really enjoy it."

His understanding of top cow families also gives Brad the ultimate edge. Each year he signs contract matings with LIC, which allows the co-operative to purchase the resulting bull calves. Brad is also a key contributor to LIC's elite heifer ET programme which includes 160 heifers across the three breeding schemes.

Brad has bred Premier Sires across every major dairy breed and is now exploring minority milking breeds with the same hands-on approach.

Rather than buying in new genetics to achieve this, he's committed to 'doing it yourself' breeding each new breed from scratch over generations.

One of Brad's most successful cow families traces back to a single, standout dam named Sonia, the matriarch of what's now known as the S family. Although Sonia's life was short, her genetic legacy has been nothing short of transformative. At the time, she held the title of highest BW cow in New Zealand, and her influence continues through her descendants.

Sonia is the dam and grand dam of several standout bulls, including Sublime and Stamina, both of which have made their mark in breeding programmes across New Zealand. Sublime has performed strongly in Australia, while Stamina enters the Australian catalogue for the first time this year.

A review of production records from Brad's cows highlights the strong production capabilities of LIC genetics, with a clear emphasis on efficiency. His crossbred herd consistently averages 600 kgMS per lactation and produces around 6,000 litres. Notable standouts include the bull dams behind several of the Paynes sires set to be marketed this year.

Paynes Excelsiors' Jersey dam produced more than 740 kgMS and over 7,500 litres in her last lactation, while the crossbred dam of Fast Forward Team® KiwiCross bull 524008 - Sincerely, recorded nearly 9,500 litres and over 700 kgMS. Demonstrating strong early production, the crossbred dam of Sublime and Stamina delivered over 630 kgMS and more than 7,000 litres as a two-year-old.

Claire and Brad are grounded when it comes to their future goals. There's no pressure on their boys, Archie and Austin, to take over, but they're proud that both have already shown an interest and like to lend a hand on the farm. Brad often reflects on the moment his father handed over the reins to him, acknowledging how hard that must have been. "When the kids bring me ideas of what they'd like to do with the farm, I'll listen. Dad did that for me, and I'll do that for my boys too." If the boys choose a different path, Brad and Claire will support them wholeheartedly. But for now, they're quietly confident, the Payne Farm legacy will continue.

Farm facts

Farm owners
Brad and Claire Payne

Name of farm
Paynes Farm

Herd size
800 peak

Location
Cambridge, Waikato

Bulls purchased by LIC

- 112 bulls purchased since 2010
- 25 Holstein Friesian, 8 Jersey, 79 KiwiCross®
- First bull in the premier sires team was in 2011

L to R: Austin and Achie Payne

More Milk, More Profit

Boost your milk yield and financial returns with our SGL Compact® sires.

A cost-effective and convenient alternative to traditional natural mating bulls that can reduce gestation length by up to 12 days.

"We have shortened our calving period to 5 weeks for the main herd with average calving reduced by 10 days. Also, made a significant saving in labour, AI time and general mucking around"

Ben Bennett - Pomborneit, VICTORIA

"I have reduced my calving spread from 11 weeks to 8 weeks and by doing this I have gained an extra 3 weeks of milk in the vat from these later calving cows"

Chris Bagot - Gippsland, VICTORIA

"I used SGL Compact to get more days in milk and to increase my profit by having more cows in the vat earlier. Also to take pressure off staff by shortening up my calving period"

Jon Ryan - Gippsland, VICTORIA

NOTE: SGL Compact® Offspring must not be bred.
Visit: licnz.com.au/about/terms-conditions

Contact your LIC district manager to order or call **1800 454 694**

licnz.com.au/sgl

LIC®
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT