

Dairy farm waste another's gain

By a Special
Correspondent

Surrylea Farm supplies the Murray Goulburn Co-Op with premier milk from its base at Heathmere in Victoria, about ten minutes from Portland.

Casey Taylor, and his family look after 450 cross-bred Jerseys and Friesians for milking, on a total

While Casey likes to relax he is serious about farming. He desires to exact every ounce of 'white gold' from the property that has given them life. Casey explained how they began to look at more effective ways of using their summer fodder crops in con

in the area had supplied their farm equipment including the set up for irrigation of their property. The Taylors are more than happy with their service, so it made sense to bring them on for advice with this effluent



Casey, Jack, Bonnie and Banja

area of 415 hectares of pastureland.

Casey grew up on Surrylea and is in partnership with his parents Peter and Wendy, and apart from his tinkering with old Holden cars he loves to camp and socialise with his wife Bonnie and their two children, Jack and Banjo.

junction with an effluent separation program using the Bauer Rainstar which irrigates their pastures — but like others who have found the need to value-add to their properties, Surrylea turned effluent into good use. ThinkWater, the local Bauer dealers



separation program. "We chose the Rainstar in our program because the hard effluent was quite acidic, and the Bauer product was made of galvanised and stainless steel parts," said Casey.

"If we find too much potassium, we can manage this by silage crops and applying a grazing interval..."

The farm produces 500 to 520 kilograms of milk solids per cow from a pasture-based system. They collect the effluent from the dairy through the feed pad and laneways, then it is gravity fed into catchment ponds. It is a relatively inexpensive process that ends up mixing with the water sprayed from Bauer's Rainstar onto fodder crops

consisting of turnips, rape and millet, as well as the green pastures. Effectively, they work on irrigating between 16 and 20 hectares per season with the idea of rotating over three years. This also helps to avoid a build up of nutrients in the soil. The system has been operating for five years now and the first block of 16 hectares has not required any phosphorus, potassium or sul-

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phur fertilisers for four years. "If we find too much potassium, we can manage this by silage crops and applying different grazing intervals," explained Casey.

The Taylors are thrilled with the savings they gain through this process with fertiliser savings 'well and truly covering labour and associated running costs'. These cost savings would include power, and maintenance as well as the ad-



Bauer's regional sales manager, Chris Orr, with a E11 Rainstar

ditional feed they can grow which is their return on investment. With the system in place the farm can guarantee 10 tonnes of dry matter per hectare from a summer crop. And to replace this feed with lucerne hay would cost them about \$350 a dry tonne or \$3,000 per hectare on the 16 hectares they irrigate each season.

The Taylors have brought Surrylea through an expansion phase with other innovative ideas but it will take three or four more years of consolidation and fine tuning of the system to realise even greater yields from the Heathmere property.



Milking sheds to ponds, Casey is happy with the returns

