

Tocal dairy video transcript

Hello my name is Mia and today we are going to have a look at the dairy at Tocal.

This is a 10 a side herringbone dairy – so 20 cows are milked at the same time. We milk 220 cows on average each day giving about 37 ½ thousand litres of milk each week.

Our cows graze on pasture – usually a combination of ryegrass, white and red clover, kikuyu and Lucerne - we also feed them supplements to provide an extra boost of energy.

Each cow is identified by the number on her ear tag, so this is cow 1234, she also has a small electronic tag which is a National Livestock Identification System tag, but for farm management this number is used to identify her.

Cows are milked twice a day and they get to know the routine pretty well but the staff still bring the cows in for each milking session. They wait in the yards until it is their turn for milking and they come onto the milking platform and fill up the stalls. The pit between the two sides of the dairy gives staff easy access to putting the cups on the cow's udder.

To milk the cows, the staff move along the pit and place the cups on the cow's teats. It takes about six to eight minutes to milk a cow depending on how much milk she is giving. While the cows are being milked they are given the supplement.

The cups are released automatically from the udder when the flow of milk falls indicating that she is finished. Staff then spray each teat with iodine to protect against infection.

Milk is transported from the cups through a series of pipes and into a refrigerated tank. This tank holds 16,000 litres of milk and the milk is picked up by trucks every second day.

Milking the whole herd takes about two hours and after milking is finished the cows head back to the pasture, the farm team clean the dairy and the yards and get on to all the other farm jobs.