



Australian Dairy Farmers Co-operative NEWS

Feature Article - July 2015

A Seasonal Approach to Dairy Farming: Meet ADFC suppliers John and Jan Hinkley

In south west Victoria, John and Jan Hinkley are well-known for their farming model. They are seasonal dairy farmers and the system is proving to be a sustainable one for them and for a number of other dairy families in the region.

Their model offers something for the times as well: they place a premium on the environment.

"I believe seasonal farming has a bigger part to play in the industry," John explains. "We're also running an environmentally sustainable business. I believe you need to leave the farm in a better state than when you started working on it."



Smoooooch!

The Hinkleys have worked their land to a point where 95 per cent of what they need to run their dairy farm comes from their farm. They only purchase a small amount of feed - the rest of the inputs are readily available on their property. This gives them more control and leaves them less vulnerable to market prices for grain and other inputs.

Their seasonal model also has its benefits for both the cows and the farmers. Their model sees the cows only calve once a year and the herd dried off completely for around six weeks. The notion of giving a dairy farmer a break from milking could also be a selling point when trying to entice the next generation of farmers to the industry.

Like seasonal crops, John also believes milk needs to be viewed as a seasonal resource. This is a challenge to both processors and consumers, but John believes it should be addressed and says you don't need to look too far afield to see a successful large-scale model.

"The most successful seasonal farming is in New Zealand – you only need to look at it. It is successful and it's looked up to. And I think in order for the Australian industry to grow and get stronger it needs to grow its peak milk."

John believes by doing this the industry could better reflect its seasonal nature, provide a more sustainable business model and become a more environmentally friendly industry in line with consumer expectations.

John and Jan have run their dairy farm in Elingamite for more than 30 years. They milk around 570 cows.



ADFC

AUSTRALIAN
DAIRY FARMERS
CO-OPERATIVE

Fairness for our farmers

Visit our website: adfc.org.au | Follow ADFC on Twitter: [@ADFC_](https://twitter.com/ADFC_)