



# Semex ai24™

**Company:** Hugh & Jennifer Forsythe,  
Landerry Farms Ltd

**Location:** Geraldine, South Island

**Herd Size:** 700

## BACKGROUND

Hugh & Jennifer Forsythe have been farming close to Geraldine in the South Canterbury district for 5 years. All 700 of their cows were fitted with ai24 collars in May 2018 before the start of the autumn breeding season. Their primary motivation for getting an automated heat detection system was three-fold; there were too many empty 2 year olds at the end of the breeding season, they realised that semen and CIDR's were wasted on questionable/missed heats, and wanted to get rid of clean-up beef bulls. "We were in the market for collars and ai24 proved to be the most cost effective option especially because there are no annual subscription fees and the product support after purchase was superior to what other companies offered. Semex was also open to structuring the payment plan according to our cash flow."

## CHALLENGES

Hugh uses a lot of sexed semen, an expense but a necessary expense to expedite genetic progress in the herd. All first calf heifers get inseminated with sexed semen and the top 60% of his cows. Before ai24 they used to synchronise a third of their 2 year olds to get them into calf before the end of the breeding season. "Since investing in the system we're synchronising less than 10% of our 2 year old group where in the past it was at least a third. ai24 is very accurate in identifying those early, usually silent, heats post calving." The ai24 system gives you the exact time heat signs start, reaches the peak, and decreases. "We found using sexed semen we get the best conception rates inseminating 16 - 21 hours after peak heat." says Hugh. The efficiency of the system has allowed them to implement artificial breeding in the afternoon as well.

## SYSTEM & BENEFITS

"Integration of the system has been smooth and the cows tolerate the collars well if they are put on correctly; we haven't lost a collar or have any other issues." The software is user friendly and easy to learn; even the relief workers are confident in using the system which gives peace of mind and having the system available on any mobile device just furthers ease of use and data entry. "Quality of life was also big driver in getting this system. For 10 years prior to ai24 I was at the dairy every morning selecting the cows for artificial breeding. And now for the first time in 10 years I can sleep in because I trust the system to identify the cows on heat." Hugh says the additional benefit of detecting health issues by measuring eating and rumination is also an advantage, "The decrease in eating and rumination is extremely sensitive and accurate in detecting sick cows, especially mastitis and lameness, and early identification means the convalescence period is much shorter."

Hugh gladly recommends the ai24 system to anyone that asks. "The return on investment is quick; roughly calculated it's 3 years when we consider the cost of semen, tailpaint, synchronisation aids, cost of pick up bulls and a reduction in the number of empty cows at the end of each season."



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*Hugh Forsythe*

