

Dairy tech trends in 2023



Automation investments remain a focus for farmers but wearables are on the rise, writes DairyNZ research engineer Brian Dela Rue.

New Zealand dairy farmers have been investing in more technology to help with automation in the dairy shed and herd management, according to DairyNZ's 2023 Technology Survey.

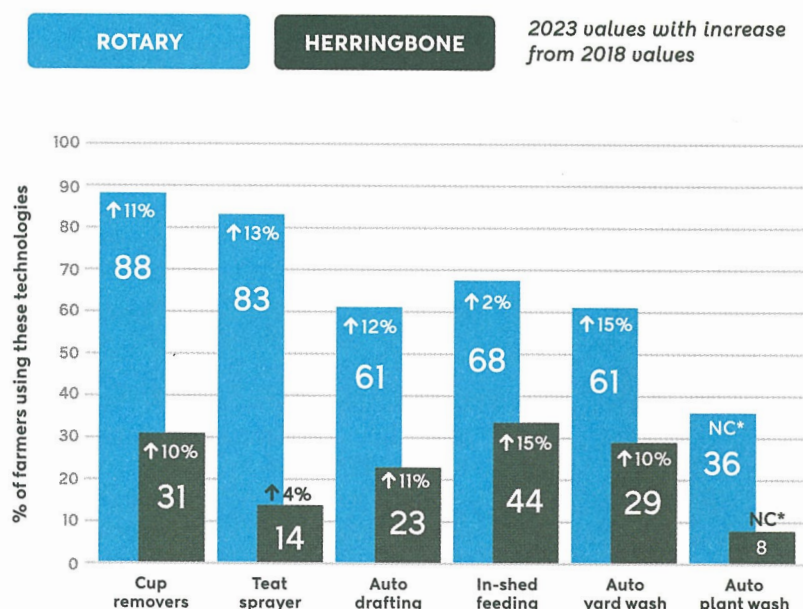
The five-yearly survey showed which technologies were being adopted – and how quickly – by Kiwi farmers.

From the data, we can better understand dairy farmers' milking practices, and how they're using technology to help with milking and animal management. In the 2023 survey, we also explored technology and infrastructure for grazing management, stand-off facilities, and heat stress management.

Results showed farmers are using automation technology to be more efficient in the dairy, meaning fewer people are required for milking.

We also saw a jump in farmers investing in animal monitoring technology (wearables) from the 2018 survey. A big reason is that farmers are looking to reduce the workload of key people on-farm and to provide consistent heat detection results. Using wearables for health monitoring, cow movement and pasture allocation are other motivations.

Which automation technologies are farmers using?



Deep dive

Automatic cup removers (ACRs)

ACRs were installed at every bail in 88% of rotary dairies, while 28% of herringbone dairies had ACRs installed at every bail and 3% had ACRs fitted in some bails.

Most new rotaries have automatic cup removers, teat sprayers and drafting, which reduces the need for a person at the cups-off position.

Deep dive

In-shed feeding systems

Our survey showed 44% of herringbone dairies had an in-shed feeding system, 38% of which were manual systems, and 6% were computerised systems allocating the same amount of feed to each cow.

For rotary dairies, 68% had an in-shed feeding system, 27% had computerised systems capable of allocating different feed amounts to each cow, 29% had computerised systems capable of allocating the same feed amount to each cow, and 12% were manual systems.

** NC indicates no change/ increase from 2018.*