



# WHAT IS WORKING, AND WHY?

by Alex Jenkins

The telephone interrupts my early morning routine. It's my client. He sounds concerned. "Milk is down four litres", he says. I swallow hard and ask what has changed. He says: "Nothing!" Thus begins a challenging day.

## Where to begin

Rather counter-intuitively, the ability to fix a situation like this successfully does not begin with an understanding of what went wrong. Rather, it begins a long time before that fateful phone call. It begins with a firm grasp of why things went right in the first place.

This month we celebrate those farmers whose farming enterprises have stood the test of time. Personally, I feel that these amazing people have one common trait: consistency. Consistency is the ability to do the same thing, the same way, at the same time, every day – no matter what.

I recently had the privilege of going to the USA and spending a week on an amazing dairy farm. The farm boasts exceptional genetics and massive milk production and is hugely profitable. What surprised me is that the farmer is willing to divulge every single secret he has in order to help

others understand the mechanics of profitable dairy farming. When I questioned him on this, his reply stuck with me. "I'm happy to share all my secrets, because most folks take my systems, some folks may even implement them, but hardly anyone will keep doing it consistently like I do."

### USE A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Consistency is hard; it is repetitive, it is mundane, it is boring. So how do we breed a culture of consistency into our farms if it is ultimately boring? We use systems.

First, we need to determine the very best way of doing a boring, repetitive task. Then, find a way to reward your staff for following the system.

If we always do things the same way, if we are consistent, we can see that our actions have certain results. If we change our actions, we get different results. We can measure our actions and results. We can improve. We can understand why certain actions work better than others. We can understand why things are going well.



### I HAVE A SAYING:

*"If you always do what you are doing, you'll end up where you are heading."*

**If you jump from one chaotic situation to the next, you will end up with nothing but chaos. If you consistently and thoughtfully work towards success, you will stand the test of time and you might even make some money and have some fun along the way.**

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