



# Semex ai24™

**Company:** Pete, Dulcie & Tony Barton,  
Kauri Glen Ltd

**Location:** Waharoa, North Island

**Herd Size:** 160

## BACKGROUND

Tony Barton of Kauri Glen Holsteins is a 2nd generation dairy farmer close to Matamata in the Waikato district. Dairy farming has become a business with tight margins that necessitates better management of our cows. That's why Tony made a profit driven decision to move from year-round calving pattern to split season with the start and finish of the seasons aligning with their milk buyer's payment system. This was the primary motivation to get an automated heat detection system and prompted an investigation into the different options on the market. "With the pressure of shifting to seasonal breeding and the issue of reliable labour, I was worried that we'll miss cows on heat resulting in a poor pregnancy rate. To make money cows have to be in calf and that is the primary objective."

## CHALLENGES

As mentioned, Tony was plagued by staffing issues and found it difficult to trust staff to accurately identify cows in heat and manually draft them. Tony tested the viability of one other automated heat detection system and said that while the capital investment of the collars is high initially, they are more economically viable in the long run and have very little maintenance. The collars have an expected battery life of 5 years and comes with a 3-year 100% warranty. "Prior to ai24 we used tail paint and did heat observation 2 - 3 times a day. We still tailpaint here and there as a "back up", but we've become very reliant on ai24."

## SYSTEM & BENEFITS

In addition to detecting heat, the collars also measure eating and rumination as standard. "This system quickly identifies if a cow is sick and we found that especially in cases of Theileria we caught them early and recovery after treatment was much faster." Jerome Ferguson is the new assistant manager on the farm and the simplicity of the software means it's easy to learn and implement, "Jerome has shown a real interest in the system and is already using it with ease."

Their current goal is to tighten both breeding seasons. "Currently the autumn mating season is 5 weeks and spring 7 weeks, but the goal is to reduce both by 1 week." Software reports makes individual cow management easy by keeping track of non-cycling cows, cows with irregular cycles as well as cows due on heat and due for pregnancy check; each which will assist them in reaching their goal. "I would highly recommend the ai24 system to anyone."

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**Tony Barton**  
**of Kauri Glen Holsteins**

