



# NZ technology set to change Chinese dairy industry

**N**EW Zealand's global leader in animal weigh scales, milk metering and electric fence systems, Tru-Test Group, has just won a New Zealand China Trade Association (NZCTA) award for technology that is set to help revolutionise China's dairy industry.

The HSBC Best Exporter with China award reflects Tru-Test's success in opening up the market for walk-over weighing and animal weight data management for the country's 12 million-strong dairy cow industry.

With vastly higher input costs than New Zealand (in addition to their feed-lot structure, they import lucerne hay from the US, for example) China needs a systematic means of measuring and managing cow performance.

Tru-Test Group introduced the first walk-over weigh scales system to China just over a year ago, and now around 2 per cent of cows in China are being weighed and the data captured. That means 98 per cent are not – underlining the market's potential.

Tru Test Group's market manager for Asia Nick Howarth said the likely uptake of the Chinese dairy farmers and the intensity of the Chinese dairy industry's production was likely to provide valuable insights for the New Zealand industry and further opportunities for companies which can export unique Kiwi technology.

"Given the number of people in China and the size of their industry, their dairy industry will not be a competitor to New Zealand's – instead it's a lucrative market for New Zealand technology and an opportunity to better understand the impli-



**Prime Minister John Key with Tru-Test Group CFO Ian Hadwin and HSBC CEO David Griffiths with the HSBC Best Importer or Exporter with China award.**

cations of a different style of dairying," Nick said.

Given the intensity of production in China, Nick believed the majority of Chinese dairy operations would be using the technology within five years.

Tru-Test Group is working in close partnership with their Chinese distributor to educate farm managers about the need for better animal monitoring, and the ROI possibilities.

The distributors' field force is primarily scientists and technicians who are able to work through the animal health, production and feeding considerations with farm managers.

"Although the Chinese and New Zealand markets are like chalk and cheese, the overall benefits for the New Zealand dairy industry are the same as they are in China. It's all about maximising the productivity of the dairy herd to increase profitability."

Tru-Test's walk-over weigh scales capture and store animal weights. The scales feature advanced technology that enables farm managers to weigh the animals without stopping them on the platform – critical for the dairy environment, and especially in China with their large average herd sizes.

Walk over weighing has largely been valuable through monitoring mob weight trends. However, with the emergence of electronic identification (EID) technology, farm managers can also monitor individual animal performance.

The weights captured by the walk-over weigh scale can help detect potential productivity and animal health issues. It also enables the segregation of high and low performing cows for differential feeding and health supplement programmes, understanding of optimum return on investment from feed inputs and assists in culling decisions.



# NZ firm invests big in Brazil

Tru-Test Group, a New Zealand manufacturer of electric fencing systems, milk metering and animal weighing systems, is investing heavily in Brazil to grow the company.

Tru-Test Group has announced the purchase of a majority shareholding in its Brazilian distributor Farm Tech.

Farm Tech, a leading Brazilian supplier of agricultural products, has been Tru-Test's distributor in Brazil for the past 16 years.

Tru-Test Group chief executive Greg Muir said the move was an important step in the company's global growth strategy.

"Brazil is already the world's largest exporter of beef and the fifth largest producer of milk.

"Global investment in Brazilian agriculture is driving up land prices and accelerating the trend toward more efficient utilisation of pastures."

He said the electric fence market there was growing rapidly, but it was also a very protected market where local Brazilian companies dominated.

"This acquisition will allow us to better leverage our position there," Mr Muir said.

Last year, Tru-Test Group announced a major expansion in

Europe, with the purchase of two leading agricultural product distributors, and is now represented throughout North America, Latin America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Additionally, Tru-Test Group was recently named the HSBC Best Importer-Exporter with China at the New Zealand-China Trade Association (NZCTA) Awards in Auckland.

The award recognises the 315 per cent business growth achieved by Tru-Test Group in China over the past two years through sales of milk meters, electric fencing and scales for live animal weighing, Mr Muir said.