

Bill Marshall milks 250 cows near Otautau.

For winter, he trucks his cows to a grazier in Northern Southland. The journey takes about an hour each way.

Bill didn't realize why standing stock was such a big issue until he saw how much effluent fourteen of his cull cows produced while they were waiting in the yard to be taken away.

That was what made Bill decide to stand his stock. And he's done it ever since.

Two days before the truck arrives, Bill divides his cattle into two herds and feeds them straw or baleage, nothing green, in grazed off paddocks.

The night before they're scheduled to go, Bill moves his cattle into the yard near the shed so that it's easy to load them up in the morning.

Bill splits up his herd to keep them from trampling the heavy soils in his pastures. While the cows still create mud, Bill is satisfied that the damage is nothing that can't be fixed with the strategic application of grass seed if paddocks do not recover over the winter naturally.

Bill knows that standing his cows off for two days won't affect their health and that it will improve their transport. So he keeps on doing it year after year.

My name is Bill,
I'm a Southland
dairy farmer.
I stand my stock.



John Clarke milks 2000 cows at Scott's Gap near Otautau.

Over winter, all his cows are grazed off with graziers or on leased runoff blocks. Some travel as far as Omakau in Otago.

John believes that transport by stock truck is very stressful for cows, which is why he tries to make it more comfortable for them by standing them off before transport.

John has found that his cows carry less weight and have better footing during travel if they have been stood off beforehand. Not to mention that standing off cows keeps effluent off the roads.

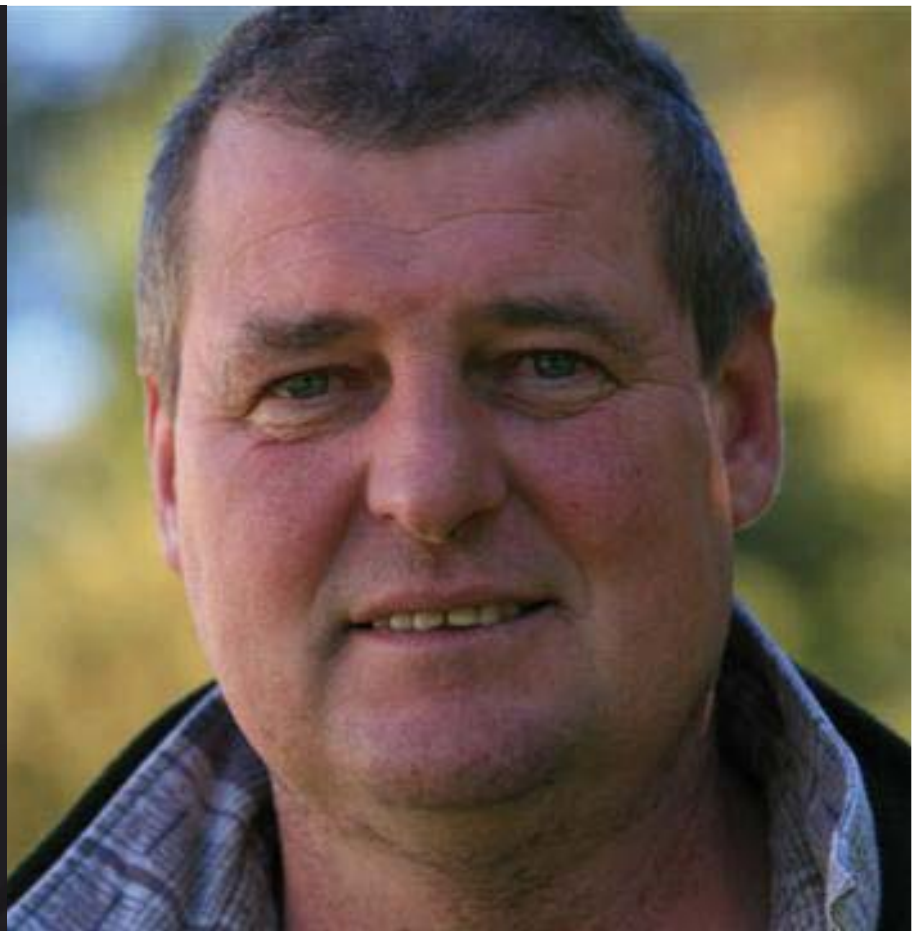
Planning and organisation are essential when it comes to moving stock. John follows a 24-hour plan that includes standing stock in the yards overnight for 16-17 hours. Over time he has learned that it takes at least 12 hours for cows to empty.

For another thing, John doesn't transport his stock all at once. Instead, he spreads it out over several days. This allows the cows to stand off in small mobs, so that John has time to make sure all of his cows are ready before they go.

Since transporting 2000 cows requires a large number of trips, communication and organisation with transport companies and graziers is essential. That's why John has bought his own stock truck. Now he has control over how and when his cows are moved.

And he can make sure the stock truck tanks are empty before his cows get on.

My name is John,
I'm a Southland
dairy farmer.
I stand my stock.



Philip van der Bijl oversees a large farm in the Aparima catchment. He works with his son-in-law John Lang and his grandson Matt.

All winter grazing is done locally.

However, the scale of the system means that around 400 cows are transported during the year.

Philip believes that stock effluent on roads would disappear if farmers stood their stock and communicated better with transport companies.

That's why Philip has a policy of standing off all animals 12 hours prior to transport.

During that time he only feeds them straw or baleage. Nothing green.

Philip believes that the biggest problem occurs in the autumn, when a lot of people give their cattle a bit more green feed to eat than they should and then they load the cows straight on the truck.

Sometimes, it has nothing at all do with the farmer though. The truckie suddenly rings and he says that he's going to come at a different time, and that messes everything up.

That's why when it comes to moving stock, Philip makes sure to coordinate carefully with his truck driver. Because transport companies need to help as well. They can do this by showing up on time with empty holding tanks.

Philip knows that standing stock won't affect his cows' health as long as he looks after them. But it will improve transport.



I'm Philip. This is my grandson Matt. And my son-in-law John. We're Southland dairy farmers.
We stand our stock.

Steven Kennedy manages operations and logistics for **Farmright**, a farm management company that oversees 36 large dairy farms in Southland.

Farmright is committed to keeping the environment and the region clean.

That's why Farmright has a policy of standing all stock for 12 hours.

Steven believes that since the policy has been introduced there has been an estimated 90% improvement in effluent spillage problems from trucks carting cows from Farmright properties.

"I think we've made huge steps forward, and that's backed up by the positive feedback we've gotten from the transport companies," Steven says.

It all comes down to planning and preparation. Steven knows that when you're shifting thousands of cows, you've got to make sure that it's done efficiently.

That means the cows need to be stood off for at least 12 hours. And that the trucks need to arrive at the farm with empty holding tanks.

Steven believes that as long as both the farmers and the truck drivers understand their roles, they can keep effluent off the roads.

Steven doesn't know of any farms where standing stock has caused health problems. All Farmright farms carry out a 12-hour stand off.

And so far as he can see, it's only been for the better. The cows feel more comfortable during travel and the roads stay clean.

My name is Steven,
I work for a company
that manages
Southland dairy farms.
We stand our stock.

