

TRANSFORMING TECHNOLOGY

With 500 cows, four children and a variety of industry roles, Western Victorian dairyfarmers Mark and Sam Billing are happy for all the help technology can offer.

But with so many products on the market, the couple says the challenge is to identify the technology that has the right fit for their operation.

Mark will talk to delegates at this year's Dairy Research Foundation Symposium about the ways technologies they have installed in recent years have transformed their dairy business. Some examples include: milk metering with conductivity, grain feeding based on individual production and body weight gain, walkover scales, cow activity meters, automatic drafting, in-shed alerts and individual cow information.

"When we consider investing in a new piece of technology we consider its potential to drive profitability – by aiding farm decisions or by helping us better manage our inputs, resources or animals. And we also consider ease of use, relevance to our system, its cost and time effectiveness," Mark said.

"If the technology is difficult for me or our staff to use or understand, then it will be of limited value, no matter how good it appears."

Aware that many products are developed for overseas barn-style systems, the Billings always carefully assess the relevance of a new technology to their pasture-based farm.

Mark says that while technology can provide a lot of information to help with day-to-day activities, it can also waste a lot of time and money if the data is not presented in a useable way, or if it is not acted upon.

"We look for technology that will help us make good and timely decisions, for example, grain-feeding on the basis of production enables us to set a grain diet based on desired outcomes and then deliver grain at an individual or group level," Mark said.

To hear more about the technology operating on the Billings farm, attend this year's Dairy Research Foundation Symposium, to be held in the Hunter Valley, NSW 19-20 June.

For more information: <http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/foundations/drf/symposium>, email esther@estherprice.com.au or phone 1800 177 636.



Photo: Click here to receive a high res image by automatic email: DRF-Billing@monkscom.com.au

Caption: Mark Billing will speak about on-farm technology at this year's Dairy Research Foundation Symposium.

Media contact: This media has been released by Monks Communication on behalf of the FutureDairy project.

Lee-Ann Monks ph 07 5450 0946 or 0419 349 244 email: media_releases@monkscom.com.au.